



Interior of Bab Zaweyleh, the Southern Gate of Cairo.

THE
ENGLISHWOMAN IN EGYPT

LETTERS FROM CAIRO,

WRITTEN DURING A RESIDENCE THERE IN 1842, 3, & 4,

WITH

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BY HIS SISTER.

IN TWO VOLUMES—VOL. I.

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P R E F A C E.

THE desire of shortening the period of my separation from a beloved brother, was the first and strongest motive that induced me to think of accompanying him to the country in which I am now writing, and which he was preparing to visit for the third time. An eager curiosity, mainly excited by his own publications, greatly increased this desire ; and little persuasion on his part was necessary to draw me to a decision ; but the idea was no sooner formed than he found numerous arguments in its favour. The opportunities I might enjoy of obtaining an insight into the mode of life of the higher classes of the ladies in this country, and of seeing many things highly interesting in themselves, and rendered more so by their being accessible only to a lady, suggested to him the idea that I might both gratify my own curiosity and collect much information of a novel and

interesting nature, which he proposed I should embody in a series of familiar letters to a friend. To encourage me to attempt this latter object, he placed at my disposal a large collection of his own unpublished notes, that I might extract from them, and insert in my letters whatever I might think fit; and in order that I might record my impressions and observations with less restraint than I should experience if always feeling that I was writing for the press, he promised me that he would select those letters which he should esteem suitable for publication, and mark them to be copied. The present selection has been made by him; and I fear the reader may think that affection has sometimes biassed his judgment; but am encouraged to hope for their favourable reception, for the sake of the more solid matter with which they are interspersed, from the notes of one to whom Egypt has become almost as familiar as England.

SOPHIA PCOLE.

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THE ENGLISHWOMAN IN EGYPT.

LETTER I.

Alexandria, July, 1842.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

THE blessing of going into port, at the conclusion of a first long voyage, awakens feelings so deep and so lasting, that it must form a striking era in the life of every traveller. Eagerly, during a long morning, did I and my children strain our eyes as the low uninteresting coast of Egypt spread before our view, that we might catch the first glimpse of one or more of those monuments of which we had hitherto only heard or read. The first object which met our view was the Arab Tower, which stands on a little elevation; and shortly after, the new lighthouse on the peninsula of the Pharos, and the Pasha's army of windmills, showed our near approach to Alexandria, and the

Pillar (commonly called Pompey's) seemed to rise from the bay.

The coast presents to the Mediterranean a long sandy flat, bearing throughout a most desolate aspect, and in no part more so than in the neighbourhood of Alexandria. To the west of this town we see nothing but a tract of yellowish calcareous rock and sand, with here and there a few stunted palm-trees, which diversify but little the dreary prospect.

The old or western harbour (anciently called Eunostus Portus) is deeper and more secure than the new harbour (which is called Magnus Portus). The former, which was once exclusively appropriated to the vessels of the Muslims, is now open to the ships of all nations; and the latter, which was "the harbour of the infidels," is almost deserted. The entrance of the old harbour is rendered difficult by reefs of rocks, leaving three natural passages, of which the central has the greatest depth of water. The rocks occasion a most unpleasant swell, from which we all suffered, but I especially; and I cannot describe how thankfully I stepped on shore, having passed the smooth water of the harbour. Here already I see so much upon which to remark, that I must indulge myself by writing two or three letters before our arrival in Cairo, where the state of *Arabian* society being unaltered by European innovations, I hope to observe much that will in-

terest you with respect to the condition of the native female society. I do not mean to give you many remarks on the manners and customs of the male portion of the people, my brother having written so full a description of them, the correctness of which has been attested by numerous persons, who cannot be suspected (as his sister might be) of undue partiality.

To tell you of our landing, of the various and violent contentions of the Arab boatmen for the conveyance of our party, of our really polite reception at the custom-house, and of our thankfulness when enjoying the quiet of our hotel, would be to detain you from subjects far more interesting ; but I long to describe the people by whom we were surrounded, and the noisy crowded streets and lanes through which we passed. The streets, until we arrived at the part of the town inhabited by Franks, were so narrow that it was extremely formidable to meet anything on our way. They are miserably close, and for the purpose of shade the inhabitants have in many cases thrown matting from roof to roof, extending across the street, with here and there a small aperture to admit light ; but the edges of these apertures are generally broken, and the torn matting hanging down : in short, the whole appearance is gloomy and wretched. I ought not, however, to complain of the narrowness of the streets, for where the sun is not

excluded by matting, the deep shade produced by the manner in which the houses are constructed is most welcome in this sunny land ; and, indeed, when we arrived at the Frank part of the town, which is in appearance almost European, and where a wide street and a fine open square form a singular contrast to the Arab part of the town, we scarcely congratulated ourselves ; for the heat was intense, and we hastened to our hotel, and gratefully enjoyed the breeze which played through the apartments. I hear that many persons prefer the climate of Alexandria to that of Cairo, and pronounce it to be more salubrious ; but a Caireen tells me that their opinion is false—that it is certainly cooler, but that the air is extremely damp, and although the inhabitants generally enjoy a sea breeze, that luxury involves some discomfort.

But I must tell you of the people ; for there appeared to my first view none but dignified grantees, in every variety of costume, and miserable beggars, so closely assembled in the narrow streets that it seemed as though they had congregated on the occasion of some public festival. On examining more closely, however, I found many gradations in the style of dress of the middle and higher classes ; but the manner of the Eastern (even that of the well-clothed servant) is so distinguished, and their carriage is so superior, that a European glancing for the first time at their picturesque costume, and

observing their general bearing, may be perfectly at a loss as to what may be their position in society.

I believe that I have already seen persons of almost every country bordering on the Mediterranean, and I can convey but a very imperfect idea of such a scene. The contrast between the rich and gaudy habits of the higher classes, and the wretched clothing of the bare-footed poor, while many children of a large growth are perfectly in a state of nudity, produced a most remarkable effect. The number of persons nearly or entirely blind, and especially the aged blind, affected us exceedingly, but we rejoiced in the evident consideration they received from all who had occasion to make room for them to pass. I should imagine that all who have visited this country have remarked the decided respect which is shown to those who are superior in years; and that this respect is naturally rendered to the beggar as well as to the prince. In fact, the people are educated in the belief that there is honour in the "hoary head," and this glorious sentiment strengthens with their strength, and beautifully influences their conduct.

Many of the poor little infants called forth painfully my sympathy: their heads drooped languidly; and their listless, emaciated limbs showed too plainly that their little race was nearly run; while the evident tenderness of their mothers made

me grieved to think what they might be called on to endure. You will naturally infer that I expect few children to pass the season of infancy, and you will conclude justly ; for I cannot look at these little creatures, and suppose that they will survive what is here the most trying time, the season of dentition. I may have been unfortunate ; for among the numerous infants we have passed, I have only seen two who were able to hold their heads in an erect position, and, indeed, of those past infancy, most were very wretched-looking children. Over their dark complexions there is a white leprous hue, and they have a quiet melancholy manner, and an air of patient endurance, which affected me sensibly.

It is sad to see the evident extreme poverty of the lower orders ; and the idle, lounging manner of the working class surprised me : and yet when called on to labour, I am informed that no people work so heartily, and so patiently. I rather think they are very like their good camels in disposition, with the exception that the latter scold often if an attempt be made to overload them, and in some cases will not rise from their knees until relieved of part of their burden, while the Arabs really suffer themselves to be built up with loads as though they had no more sense of oppression than a truck or a wheelbarrow. The Arab groom, too, will run by the side of his master's horse for

as many hours as he requires his attendance without a murmur. The physical strength of these people is most extraordinary. I had an opportunity of remarking this during the removal of our luggage from the boat.

The windows of our hotel command a view of the great square, and I can scarcely describe to you the picturesque attraction of the scene. Among the various peculiarities of dress, feature, and complexion, which characterize the natives of Africa and the East, none are more striking than those which distinguish the noble and hardy western Bedawce, enveloped as he is in his ample woollen shirt, or hooded cloak, and literally clothed suitably for a Russian winter. You will believe that my attention has been directed to the veiled women, exhibiting in their dull disguise no other attraction than a degree of stateliness in their carriage, and a remarkable beauty in their large dark eyes, which, besides being sufficiently distinguished by nature, are rendered more conspicuous by the black border of kohl round the lashes, and by the concealment of the rest of the features. The camel-drivers' cries of "O'a," "Guarda," and "Sákin,"* resound every where, and at every moment, therefore, you may imagine the noise and confusion in the streets.

* "Take care," in Arabic, Italian, and Turkish.

In the open space before the hotel there are long trains of camels laden with water-skins, or with bales of merchandise, winding slowly and cautiously along even in this wide place, while their noiseless tread, and their dignified (I might almost say affected) walk, at once distinguishes them from all other beasts of burden.

I must not omit mentioning the shops of Alexandria, for they resemble cupboards rather than rooms; and this I understand to be the case in most Turkish and Arabic cities. A raised seat of brick or stone about three feet high, and the same or more in width, extends along each side of the street, and upon this the tradesman sits before his shop, either smoking or at work. It is really amusing to see how easily they appear to gain their livelihood: the fact is, that they are an exceedingly contented people, and there is much of real philosophy in their conclusions. They are seldom disposed, when working on their own account, to labour for more than enough, and have the quality, so rarely found in Europe, of considering that enough is as desirable as abundance: therefore they are happy, and "their best riches, ignorance of wealth." I have observed, at corners of the streets, or wherever else there was sufficient space, groups of men and women seated on the ground, with baskets before them containing bread and vegetables for sale.

The quarter occupied by the Europeans is the south-eastern part of the town, by the shore of the new harbour. This situation I conclude was chosen for the convenience of landing and shipping their merchandise ; but now that the old harbour is open to their vessels, the situation is not so advantageous for them. On the east side of the great square is a large building called the New Wekálch (by the Europeans Occále), for the reception of merchants and others, on the shore of the new harbour. It surrounds a spacious square court ; and the ground-floor of the building consists of magazines towards the court, and shops and the entrances of the dwellings towards the exterior.

My brother has given me a piece of information with regard to the present Pharos, which you shall receive in his own words :—

“The modern Pharos is a poor successor of the ancient building, erected by Sostratus Cnidius, from which it derives its name ; though from a distance it has rather an imposing appearance. Several Arab historians mention the telescopic mirror of metal which was placed at the summit of the ancient Pharos. In this mirror, vessels might be discerned at sea at a very great distance. El-Makreezee* informs us that the Greeks, being

* El-Makreezee flourished in the 14th and 15th centuries.

desirous of effecting the destruction of the Pharos, or of obtaining possession of the wonderful mirror, employed a deep stratagem. One of their countrymen repaired to the sovereign of the Arabs, El-Welced the son of 'Abd-el-Melik, and professed himself a convert to the faith of El-Islám, pretending that he had fled from his king, who would have put him to death. He informed the prince that he had acquired, from certain books in his possession, the art of discovering where treasures were concealed in the earth, and had thus ascertained that there was a valuable treasure, consisting of money and jewels, deposited beneath the foundations of the Pharos of Alexandria. The prince, deceived by this artful tale, sent a number of workmen with his crafty adviser to pull down the Pharos; and when more than half the building had been destroyed, the Greek made his escape to his own country, and his artifice thus became manifest. The same author relates that part of the Pharos was thrown down by an earthquake in the year of the Flight 177 (A.D. 793-4); that Ahmad Ibn-Tooloon surmounted it with a dome of wood; and that an inscription upon a plate of lead was found upon the northern side, buried in the earth, written in ancient Greek characters, every letter of which was a cubit in height, and a span in breadth. This was perhaps the inscription placed by the original architect, and which, according to Strabo,

was to this effect—‘Sostratus Cnidius, the son of Dexiphanes, to the protecting Gods, for the sake of the mariners.’ It is also related by Es-Sooyootee,* that the inhabitants of Alexandria likewise made use of the mirror above mentioned to burn the vessels of their enemies, by directing it so as to reflect the concentrated rays of the sun upon them.”

The causeway of stone which connects the fort and lighthouse with the peninsula of Pharos, is now called Ródat-et-Teen (or the Garden of the Fig), on account of a few fig-trees growing there. Its south-western extremity is called Rás-et-Teen (or the Cape of the Fig). Upon this rocky peninsula are a palace of the Pasha, and some other buildings, with the burial-ground of the Muslims, adjacent to the town.

I must endeavour in my next letter to give you a brief general account of the town, and must close this by remarking on the affecting sound of the Mueddin’s chant or Muslim call to prayer. I should be grieved to think that we are impressed by the solemnity of their sonorous voices, simply because we hear them for the first time; and trust we may always feel a mixture of pity and admiration when we believe our fellow-creatures to be in

* A celebrated Arab theologian and historian, so called from his birth-place Usyoot, or Suyoot (commonly pronounced Asyoot), in Upper Egypt.

earnest in the service of God, however mistaken their opinions. The sight of the Muslim engaged in his devotions I think most interesting ; and it cannot fail, I should hope, in impressing the beholder with some degree of veneration. The attitudes are peculiarly striking and expressive ; and the solemn demeanour of the worshipper, who, even in the busy market-place, appears wholly abstracted from the concerns of the world, is very remarkable. The practice of praying in a public place is so general in the East, and attracts so little notice on the part of Muslims, that we must be charitable, and must not regard it as a result of hypocrisy or ostentation.



LETTER II.

Alexandria, July, 1842.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

WE find little to interest us in this place, excepting by association with bygone times ; therefore our stay will not be long. But I will give you concisely an account of all that has excited our curiosity.

I am not disappointed in Alexandria (or, as it is called by the natives, El-Iskendereeyeh), for I did not imagine it could possess many attractions. It is built upon a narrow neck of land, which unites the peninsula of Pharos to the continent, and thus forms a double harbour, as did anciently the causeway, which, from its length of seven stadia, was called the Heptastadium.

The ground which is occupied by the modern town has been chiefly formed by a gradual deposit of sand on each side of the Heptastadium ; and the present situation is more advantageous for a commercial city than the ancient site. The houses are generally built of white calcareous stone, with a profusion of mortar and plaster. Some have the foundation walls only of stone, and the super-

structure of brick. They generally have plain or projecting windows of wooden lattice-work; but the windows of some houses, viz., those of Europeans, the palaces of the Pasha, the governor of Alexandria, and a few others, are of glass. The roofs are flat and covered with cement. There is little to admire in the interior architecture of the houses, excepting that they have a substantial appearance. Many ancient columns of granite and marble have been used in the construction of the mosques and private dwellings.

The water here is far from good; the inhabitants receive their supply from the cisterns under the site of the ancient city (of which I must tell you by and bye). These are filled by subterranean aqueducts from the canal during the time of the greatest height of the Nile; but in consequence of the saline nature of the soil through which it passes from the river, the water is not good. Almost every house has its cistern, which is filled by means of skins borne by camels or asses; and there are many wells of brackish water in the town.

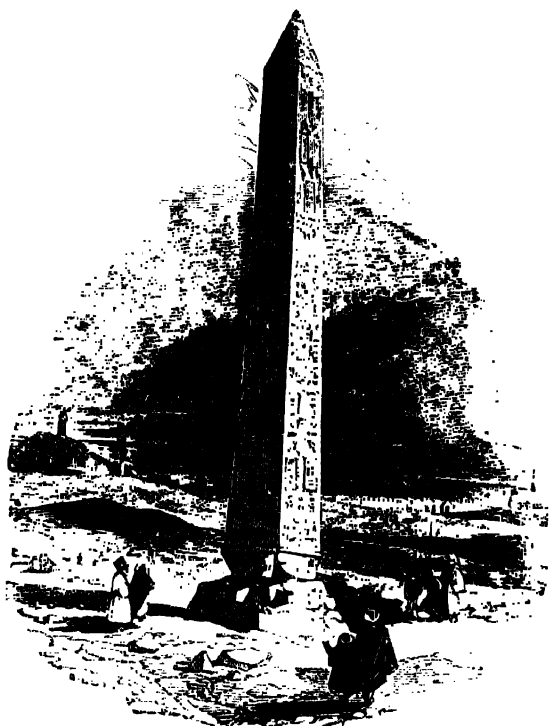
As the northern coast of Egypt has no harbour, excepting those of Alexandria, it is a place of considerable importance as the emporium and key of Egypt; but otherwise it appears to me in no respect a desirable residence, and around it nothing but sea and desert meets the eye, excepting here and there the house of a rich man, and scattered in

every direction extensive mounds of rubbish. Ancient writers have extolled the *salubrity* of the air of Alexandria. This quality of the air was attributed, according to Strabo, to the almost insular situation of the city, the sea being on one side, and the lake Marcotis on the other. The *insalubrity* of the climate, of later years, has been regarded as the result of the conversion of the lake into a salt marsh. The English army, in 1801, made a cut by which the water of the sea was admitted from the lake of Abou-Keer into the bed of the lake Marcotis; and the operation was repeated by Mohammed 'Alee in 1803, and again by the English in 1807: on each occasion, as you will have supposed, military policy dictated the measure; and as soon as the object in view had been attained, the gap was speedily closed, as it cut off the supply of fresh water from Alexandria by interrupting the course of the canal. While the communication between the two lakes remained open, it was not found that the climate of Alexandria was at all improved; and the evaporation of the waters of the lake Marcotis afterwards must have had a pernicious effect. The damp and rain during the winter here, and the heavy dew at night throughout the year, have a particularly baneful influence. Cases of fever are very general; and it is always observed that this town is one of the places where the plague makes its appearance many days earlier than in the inte-

rior of Egypt. With all these objections to Alexandria as a place of residence, it is wonderful that any persons should prefer it, and consider the climate more agreeable than that of the valley of the Nile, which all allow to be so salubrious.

There is a series of telegraphs from Alexandria to the metropolis, a distance of more than a hundred and twenty British miles. The towers composing this series are nineteen in number; the first is on the peninsula of Pharos, and the last in the citadel of Cairo.

The wall which surrounds the site of the old Arab city was rebuilt not many years since. This work was commenced in 1811. Mohammed 'Alee, fearing another invasion of the French, deemed it necessary to strengthen this place; for the wall I have mentioned defends the town on the land-side, and surrounds the cisterns from which the inhabitants derive their supply of fresh water. The wall has four gates, and I cannot describe to you the complete scene of desolation which presented itself on entering the enclosure by that gate which is nearest to the modern town, the "sea-gate;" indeed, it can scarcely be conceived: for mounds of rubbish and drifted sand occupy nearly the whole site of the ancient city. Within the area surrounded by the present wall, besides some monuments of the ancient city, are two convents and a synagogue, several groups of houses and huts, with



Cleopatra's Needle.

a few walled gardens containing chiefly palm-trees.

You will think it strange when I tell you that there are also two lofty hills of rubbish, each of which is surmounted by a fort, commanding an extensive view. It appears to me most extraordinary that any persons should choose such a foundation; but I understand it is far from remarkable, and that these accidental eminences are improved to advantage in this flat country, the face of which in a course of years has undergone important changes, from the habit of the people of leaving crumbling ruins to accumulate. Here the line of the principal street can be traced extending in a straight direction from the shore of the old harbour to the Gate of Resheed,* which is at the eastern extremity of the enclosure; and the direction of the other great street, which crossed the former at right angles, is observable.

It must have been an extensive city, but it is impossible to mark its precise limits. Certainly its remains alone convey an idea of its having been a flourishing town, and considerably more important than the Arab city which succeeded it.

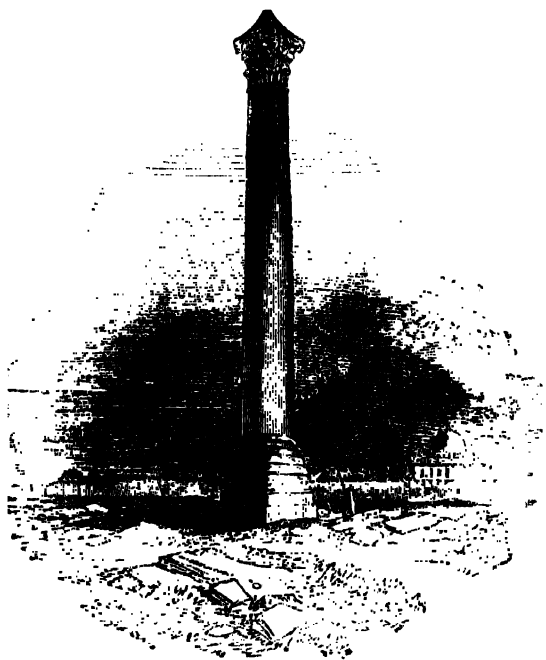
Desiring to see the Obelisks before the heat of the day, we set out early, and having passed the great square, we entered the field of ruins, and

* Resheed is the name of the town which the English call Rosetta.

found a number of peasants loitering among miserable huts, while a few children, in a state of nudity, and extremely unsightly in form, were standing or sitting in the entrances of their dwellings. I was grieved to see that the bodies of these poor little children were distended to a most unnatural size; while their limbs, which were very thin and small, appeared, from the contrast, to be sadly emaciated.

Among the mounds we observed the mouths of some of the ancient cisterns; each, with few exceptions, having the hollowed marble base of an ancient column placed over it. The cisterns seem to have extended under a great part of the ancient city; and there remain a sufficient number of them open and in good repair for the supply of the modern town. They have arched or vaulted roofs, which are supported by columns or by square pillars, and some of them have two or three ranges of pillars and arches, one above another, and are very extensive.

We saw little worthy of remark until we reached the Obelisks, which are situated at an angle of the enclosure, almost close to the shore of the new harbour; I mean those Obelisks called Cleopatra's Needles. Each is composed of a single block of red granite, nearly seventy feet in length, and seven feet and a half wide at the base. And here I wondered, as so many have done before me, that the ancient Egyptians contrived to raise such solid



Pompey's Pillar.

masses, and concluded that their knowledge of machinery, of which they have left such extraordinary proofs, must have been remarkable indeed.

Three lines of hieroglyphics adorn each of the four faces of either monument. My brother tells me that the central line bears the title and name of Thothmos the Third, who appears, from strong evidence, to have reigned shortly before the departure of the Israelites from Egypt: the lateral lines were sculptured at a later period; for they bear the name of Rameses the Great, or Sesostris. The inscriptions near the base of the erect Obelisk seemed nearly obliterated, and the prostrate one is so encumbered with rubbish, that much of it is concealed. Pliny relates that Rameses erected four obelisks at Heliopolis: those of Alexandria are perhaps two of the four thus alluded to. Their antiquity being so much greater than that of Alexandria, suggests the probability of their having been taken from Heliopolis to adorn a temple or palace in the new city. The fact of the name of Rameses the Great being sculptured on them may have given rise to the tradition that they were *erected* by that king. An adjacent fort occupies the site of an old tower which belonged to the former wall (that is, to the *old* wall of the *Arab* city), and which was called by European travellers “the Tower of the Romans;” as it was apparently

of Roman origin. Near this, standing on a mound of rubbish, we saw the shore of the new harbour, behind the wall on the left of the fort.

When the British army was in Alexandria in 1801, operations were commenced for transporting the fallen obelisk to England; but the commander-in-chief refusing to sanction the undertaking, it was abandoned, and nothing is said of its being resumed, although Mohammed 'Alee offered the monument to us some years ago.

After viewing the Obelisks, we thankfully turned homewards, for the sun had risen, and the heat became intense.

Not far from the eastern gate (perhaps two miles and a half) is the field of the memorable battle of the 21st of March, 1801, in which Sir Ralph Abercrombie, who commanded our victorious army, received his mortal wound. At the spot where the battle raged most furiously, by the sea-shore, is a quadrangular enclosure, surrounded by substantial, but now ruined walls, constructed of calcareous stone and large bricks, in distinct layers, like many other Roman buildings. The ruin is called Kasr-el-Kâyasireh (or the Pavilion, or Palace, of the Cæsars). It marks the site of a small town, which received the name of Nicopolis, in commemoration of a famous victory obtained there by Octavius Cæsar over Antony.

The Pillar called Pompey's is undoubtedly a

magnificent monument. The shaft of the column is a single block of red granite, sixty-eight feet in height, and nine feet in diameter at the bottom, according to my brother's measurement. The capital is a block of the same kind of stone, and is ten feet high. The base, plinth, and pedestal are likewise of red granite, and each is a single block. The combined length of these three pieces is seventeen feet. The total height of this superb monument is therefore ninety-five feet; and the substructure, which is partly modern, is four feet in height. The shaft is beautifully wrought, but sadly disfigured by numerous names inscribed in very large characters, with black paint. They have mostly been written by persons who have ascended to the summit. This they have contrived by flying a large paper kite, and causing it to descend so that the cord rested on the top of the capital; by these means, they succeeded in drawing a stout rope over it; and having accomplished this (to use the naval term) they easily "rigged shrouds," by which to ascend. This exploit has been performed several times, generally by naval officers, who have caused the name of their ship to be painted on the shaft.

Among the adventurers, an English lady once ascended to the summit. There is a Greek inscription on the pedestal, but it can only be faintly seen when the rays of the sun fall obliquely upon

the surface of the stone. Every traveller who examined the Pillar since the time of Pococke believed the inscription to be entirely obliterated, until Colonel Squire again discovered it. That gentleman with Mr. Hamilton and Colonel Leake deciphered (with the exception of a few characters) the lines, four in number, which record the dedication, by a "Prefect of Egypt" (whose name is almost illegible), to the "most revered Emperor, the protecting divinity of Alexandria, Diocletian the Invincible." The name of the "Prefect" also has since been deciphered by Sir Gardner Wilkinson—it is Publius. This inscription certainly proves that the column, or the building in which it stood, was *dedicated* to the Roman emperor whose name is thus recorded, but not that the column was *erected* in honour of that individual, any more than the lateral lines on the Obelisks which I have described prove that they were erected in the reign of Sesostris.

I may here briefly give you the tradition respecting the burning of the Alexandrian library (deriving my information from my brother), which took place in the time of 'Omar, as it is connected with the history of the great pillar. 'Abd-el-Latcef and El-Makreezee affirm, that this pillar originally belonged to a magnificent building, containing a library, which 'Anr, the Arab general, burned by the command of 'Omar. A particular account

of the burning of this library is given by Abu-l Faraj; but the statement of that author has been disbelieved, because the story is related by few other writers; yet why should they record what they considered an event of scarcely any importance? It is evident from the slight manner in which 'Abd-el-Lateef and El-Makreezee mention the fact, that they regarded it as a very unimportant occurrence. They allude to it merely as connected with the history of the great Pillar. The former says, "Here was the library which 'Amr Ibn-el-'A's burned by permission of 'Omar." El-Makreezee says, "The Pillar is of a red speckled stone; hard and flinty. There were around it about four hundred columns which Karaja, Governor of Alexandria in the time of the Sultán Saláh-ed-Deen Yoosuf Ibn-Eiyooob (called by Europeans "Saladin"), broke, and threw them into the sea, near the shore, to prevent the vessels of an enemy from approaching the walls of the city. It is said (he adds) that this pillar is one of those which stood in the portico of Aristotle, who there taught philosophy; and that this academy contained a library, which 'Amr Ibn-el-'A's burned by direction of 'Omar." The Arab General 'Amr, having taken Alexandria, was solicited by one Johannes, surnamed "the Grammarian," to spare the library above mentioned, and to suffer it to remain in the possession of its former owners. 'Amr, willing to

oblige the philosopher, wrote to his sovereign, desiring to know his pleasure respecting these books, and received the following answer:—"As to the books which you have mentioned, if they contain what is agreeable with the book of God, in the book of God is sufficient without them; and if they contain what is contrary to the book of God, there is no need of them; so give orders for their destruction." They were accordingly distributed about the city, to be used for heating the baths, and in the space of six months they were consumed." "Hear what happened," writes Abul-Faraj, "and wonder!" The author here quoted does *certainly* speak of this event as one of lamentable importance; but he was a *Christian* writer. The *Muslims*, though they love and encourage many branches of literature, generally imagine that the books of the Christians are useless, or of an evil tendency.

I must now leave Alexandria and its environs, saying a few words respecting the ancient Necropolis, or "City of the Dead," which I have *not* seen, being satisfied with my brother's account of it, and being anxious to proceed to Cairo.

The name of Necropolis has been given to a tract of nearly two miles in length, on the south-west of the site of the ancient city, between the old harbour and the bed of the Lake Marcotis. The sepulchres are all excavated in the rock, which is

calcareous, or rather soft. Those my brother saw were small and rudely cut, without painting or any other decorations. One of the catacombs is very spacious. It is the only one that is well worthy of being examined. The principal chamber is described as being of a circular form; and the roof is excavated like the interior of a dome. Around it are three recesses, which were doubtless receptacles for mummies; and around each of these are three troughs cut in the rock, designed to serve as sarcophagi. In other chambers are similar receptacles for the dead. The entrance of the principal, or circular, apartment being ornamented with pilasters and a pediment, it is evident that the period of the formation of the catacomb was posterior to the founding of Alexandria. Along the shore of the harbour are many other excavations, but of small dimensions, which are also sepulchres. Many of them, being partly below the level of the sea, are more or less filled with water; the part of the rock which intervened having crumbled away, and left the interior exposed to the waves. Some of these have been called "the baths of Cleopatra," though evidently sepulchres like the rest.

And now, if my account of Alexandria and its monuments has been too brief, I must plead as my apology, my anxiety to pursue our route; but I must add, that although the modern Alexandria is

the successor of one of the most illustrious cities of ancient times, it disappoints me, and occasions only melancholy reflections.

Truly history confers a deep interest on this spot, once the chief seat of Egyptian learning, the theatre of many wars and bloody tragedies, the scene of the martyrdom of St. Mark, the birth-place and residence of many of the most eminent fathers of the church, and the hot-bed of schisms and heresies. But it is only in retrospect we find that on which our minds can rest, and which can give rise to reflections which may be pursued to advantage.

LETTER III.

Cairo, July, 1842.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

TO-DAY we have arrived with thankful hearts at Cairo, our voyages by sea and by river completed for a time.

On leaving Alexandria, we engaged an iron track-boat, used chiefly for the conveyance of travellers on their way to India from Alexandria, by the canal called the Mahmoodceyeh, to the Nile. The boat was very large, containing two large cabins, the foremost of which was furnished with benches and tables, and apparently clean; and being drawn by four horses, passed so rapidly along, that we enjoyed, from the current of air, a feeling of freshness, which led us at nightfall into a grievous mistake; for we laid down, and expected rest without arranging our musquito curtains. Those who had fitted up the boat had covered the wide benches with carpet. Imagine *such* a couch in *such* a latitude! we were positively covered by fleas, and swarmed by black beetles, and the latter of such a growth as are never seen in England. Too late we repented of our error, and I should

strongly recommend any person travelling in Egypt to sleep under musquito curtains winter and summer. There is certainly a consciousness of heat and want of air, for perhaps a quarter of an hour after the curtain is closely tucked in, but what is that compared to the constant attacks of vermin of an extraordinary variety, to which the traveller in the East is subject? Our first night in the track-boat, without musquito-curtains, will not be easily forgotten.*

On the following morning we arrived at the point where the canal enters the Nile, and found that the boat which we expected would be ready for our voyage to Cairo, had conveyed a party towards the scene of a festival, and might not return for some days. Here our situation was one of severe suffering. We were stationed between two high ridges, composed of mud thrown up in forming the bed of the canal, very dry of course, and exceedingly dusty, and covered with mud huts.

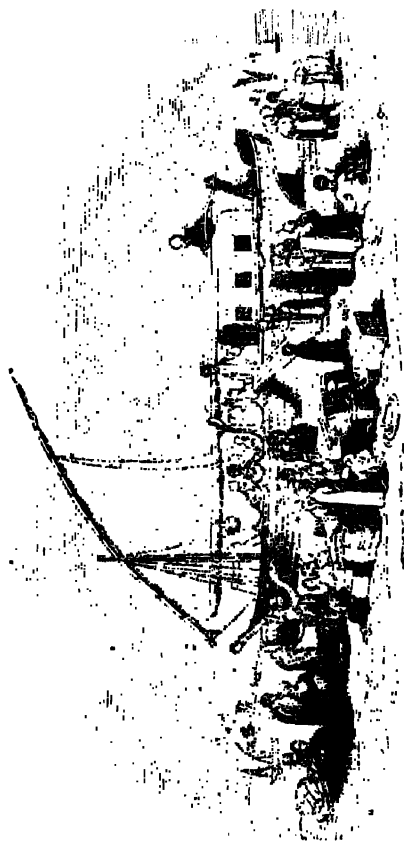
* Since I wrote the above, the Peninsular and Oriental Steam Navigation Company have, I believe, undertaken the conveyance of travellers from Alexandria to Suez. Be this as it may, it is due to the Company to say, that our voyage from England to Egypt was rendered as pleasant as a splendid vessel, excellent attendance, and every desirable accommodation could make it; and the manner in which travellers are brought through Egypt, on their way to India, is now, I am told, as comfortable as any reasonable person could desire.

The intense heat, the clouds of dust, and the smell of this place, where we were hemmed in by boats and barges for two days and nights, without being able to improve our situation (because it was necessary in order to be ready for the Nile-boat to continue near the entrance of the canal), was infinitely worse than sea-sickness, or anything else in the way of inconvenience we had hitherto experienced. Indeed the sea-sickness was welcome to me, for it confined me to my bed, and spared me the pain of seeing my own dear country, which holds so many and so much we love, fade from my sight. However long or however short may be the time proposed by any person for the purpose of visiting other countries, however pleasurable their expectations, however full of hope their prospects, there are regrets—there is a pang—on quitting *England*, which must be felt by the wayfarer, but can never be described, and is never fully anticipated. But I must not wander from my proper subject. Where the canal runs along the narrow neck of land between the salt marsh of Mareotis and that of Aboo-Keer, the sides are formed by solid masses of stone, to prevent in some degree the filtration of salt water into the Mahmoodceeyeh, as it supplies the cisterns of Alexandria. In scarcely any part does this canal occupy the bed of the *ancient* canal of Alexandria, which it crosses in several places. More than

three hundred thousand men were employed to dig it ; and about twelve thousand of these are said to have died in the course of ten months ; many of them in consequence of ill-treatment, excessive labour, and the want of wholesome nourishment and good water. Their only implements in this work were the hoes which are commonly used in Egyptian agriculture ; and where the soil was moist they scraped it up with their hands, and then removed it in baskets. The whole length of the canal is nearly fifty British miles, and its breadth about eighty or ninety feet. It was commenced and completed in the year 1819. The name of Mahmoodceeyeh was given to it in honour of Mahmoud, the reigning sultán.

In two days our promised boat arrived, and we joyfully left the Mahmoodceeyeh, and its gloomy prospect, where the peasants appeared to be suffering from abject poverty, and where the mud huts, rising one above another, many of them being built in a circular form, bore the appearance by moonlight of the ruined towers of castles, with here and there a gleam of red light issuing from the apertures.

The communication between the canal and the Nile was closed, therefore we walked for a few minutes along the bank, and we rejoiced on entering our boat to feel the sweetest breeze imaginable, and to look upon the green banks (especially on



Nile Boat.

the Delta side) of one of the most famous rivers in the world.

The boats of the Nile are admirably constructed for the navigation of that river. Their great triangular sails are managed with extraordinary facility, which is an advantage of the utmost importance; for the sudden and frequent gusts of wind to which they are subject, require that a sail should be taken in almost in a moment, or the vessel would most probably be overset. On many occasions one side of our boat was completely under water, but the men are so skilful that an accident seldom happens, unless travellers pursue the voyage during the night.

We ordered that our boat should not proceed at night, therefore we were three days on the Nile.

A custom which is always observed by the Arab boat-men at the commencement of a voyage much pleased me. As soon as the wind had filled our large sail, the Reyyis (or captain of the boat) exclaimed "El-Fât-'hah." This is the title of the opening chapter of the Kur-'an (a short and simple prayer), which the Reyyis and all the crew repeated together in a low tone of voice. Would to Heaven that, in this respect, the example of the poor Muslim might be followed by our countrymen, that our entire dependence on the protecting providence of God might be universally acknowledged, and every journey, and every voyage, be sanctified by prayer.

On the first day we passed the town of Fooweh, where I could distinguish eleven mosques with their picturesque domes and minarets, and a few manufactories; the dwellings are miserable, but when viewed from a little distance the whole has a pleasing appearance, for the minarets are white-washed, and the houses, for a town in Egypt, *have been* good. Numbers of women and girls belonging to this town were filling their pitchers on the bank as we passed; while others were washing clothes; which done, each proceeded to wash her hands, face, and feet, and immediately returned with her pitcher or bundle on her head. A piece of rag rolled in the form of a ring, and placed upon the head, served to secure the pitcher in its erect position; and I constantly saw, during our stay on the Mahmoodeeyeh, large and heavy pitchers carried by the women on their heads, without a hand upraised to keep them steady.

Fooweh, like Matoobis, is celebrated for the beauty of its women; but as our boat kept in the middle of the stream, I had no opportunity of pronouncing on their personal attractions. The lower orders are mostly, I think, remarkably plain. Their usual dress (and indeed frequently, their only article of clothing, except the head veil) is a plain blue shirt, differing little from that of the men, which is also commonly blue. It is a general custom of the Egyptian women of this class to tattoo some parts of their persons, particularly the

front of the chin and the lips, with blue marks; and like the women of the higher classes, many of them tinge their nails with the dull red dye of the henna, and arrange their hair in a number of small plaits which hang down the back.

I must not omit telling you that Fooweh is also famous for its pomegranates, which are both plentiful and excellent in flavour.

We reached the village of Shubra Kheet shortly after sunset, and as our boatmen recommended that our boat should be made fast under this place, we remained there until the morning. It was then curious to see the various occupations of the peasants, and to observe the lassitude with which they labour. During our voyage several poor fellows floated towards the boat, sitting as it were upright on the water, paddling with their feet, and bearing each three water-melons, one in each hand, and one on their heads. Their manner of swimming is extraordinary—they seem perfectly at their ease.

On the second day we passed renowned Sais, and afterwards had a glimpse of the great desert, and its almost immeasurable sea of sand. Sais was the ancient capital of the Delta, one of the most celebrated cities of Egypt, and the reputed birth-place of Cecrops, who, it is said, led a colony of Saïtes to Attica, about 1556 years before the Christian era, founded Athens, and established there the worship of Minerva (the Egyptian Neith), the tutelar goddess of his native city.

This place is so choked up with rubbish that its ruins are scarcely worth visiting ; but the labour of excavation would probably be rewarded by interesting discoveries. The modern name of the place is "Sâ-el-Hagar," that is, "Sais of the Stone," probably allusive to the great monolithic chapel described by Herodotus as the most remarkable of the monuments here existing in his time. The remains of Sais, viewed from the river, appear merely like lofty and extensive mounds. They chiefly consist of a vast enclosure, about half a mile in length, and nearly the same in breadth. This is formed by walls of prodigious dimensions, being about fifty feet thick, and, in several parts, considerably more than that in height, constructed of large crude bricks, fifteen or sixteen inches in length, eight in breadth, and seven in thickness. The rains, though very rare even in this part of Egypt, have so much decayed these walls, that from a little distance they are hardly to be distinguished from the rubbish in which they are partly buried. Within the enclosure are only seen some enormous blocks of stone, and the remains of some buildings of unburnt brick, which appear to have been tombs, and several catacombs, which have been explored and ransacked. The enclosure contained the famous temple of the Egyptian Minerva, described by Herodotus, the portico of which surpassed in its colossal dimensions all other works of a similar nature, and was adorned with

gigantic figures and enormous androsphinxes. Before it was the famous monolithic chapel I have mentioned, which was twenty-one cubits long, fourteen wide, and eight high. It is related by Herodotus that two thousand boatmen were employed during the space of three years in transporting this monolith down the Nile from Elephantine. There was also, before the temple, a colossus, in a reclining posture (or, more probably, a *sitting* posture), seventy-five feet in length, similar to that before the temple of Vulcan at Memphis, which latter colossus was the gift of Amasis. Behind the temple was a sepulchre, but for whom it was destined the historian declines mentioning. Lofty obelisks were likewise raised within the sacred enclosure, near a circular lake, which was lined with stone. This lake served as a kind of theatre for nocturnal exhibitions of solemn mysteries relating to the history of the unnamed person above alluded to, who was, probably, Osiris; for, from feelings of religious awe, many of the Egyptians abstained from mentioning the name of that god. Many other towns in Egypt disputed the honour of being regarded as the burial-place of Osiris. All the Pharaohs born in the Saitic district were buried within the enclosure which surrounded the sacred edifices of Sais; and one of those kings, Apries, founded here a magnificent palace. Of the grand religious festivals which were periodically celebrated in Egypt in ancient times, the third, in point of

magnificence, was that of Sais, in honour of Neith ; the most splendid being that of Bubastis, and the next, that of Busiris, both in Lower Egypt. That of Sais was called "the festival of burning lamps," because, on the occasion of its celebration, the houses in that city, and throughout all Egypt, were illuminated by lamps hung around them.

I mentioned that the boat we had been promised at the Mahmoodeeyeh had conveyed a party towards the scene of a festival ; and you may be surprised to hear that the manners of the modern Egyptians are not wholly different from those of the ancient Alexandrians, who flocked to the licentious festivals celebrated at Canopus in honour of the god Serapis. Innumerable boats covered the canal by night as well as by day, conveying pilgrims of both sexes, dancing, singing, and drinking, and availing themselves in every way of the religious licence afforded them. So, in the present day, vast numbers of the male inhabitants of the metropolis of Egypt, and persons from other parts, with numerous courtesans, repair to the festivals celebrated in commemoration of the birth of the seyyid * Ahmad El-Bedawee (a celebrated Muslim saint), at Tanta, in the Delta, where swarms of dancing-girls and singers contrioute to their amusement, and where, I am told, brandy is drunk almost as freely as coffee.

* Seyyid is a title given to the descendants of the Prophet.

We passed, to-day, by the village of Kafr-ez-Zeiyát, which exhibited a busy scene: numerous visitors of the seyyid landing there, on their way to Tanta, and others embarking to return to their homes.

We arrived late at the village of Nadir, under which we remained for the night. In the morning we found ourselves surrounded by fine buffaloes standing in the water. Their milk is chiefly used, and the butter made from it is very white and sweet. We often saw numbers of these animals standing or lying in the water, for the Nile is in many parts extremely shallow, and abounds with moving sandbanks. Hence the boats frequently run aground, but they are generally pushed off without much difficulty by means of poles, or the crew descend into the water and shove the vessel off with their backs and shoulders. In a calm, the boat is towed by the crew; and in several cases during our voyage, the whole boat's crew, consisting of ten men, were thus drawing it, while no one remained with us but the Reyyis. It was astonishing to see how well they performed this laborious task, in the heat of July; very seldom stopping to take rest, and then only for a short time. The boatmen generally sing while the vessel is under sail, and they often accompany their songs with the rude music of the darebukkeh and zummárah, which are a funnel-shaped earthen drum and a

double reed-pipe. There is something very agreeable in the songs of the boatmen, although the airs they sing are most strange. There is so much of contentment in the tones of their voices that it does one good to hear them.

The most common kind of passage-boat, or pleasure-boat, is called a kangeh, also pronounced kanjeh. It is long and narrow, and does not draw much water. It has two masts, with two large triangular sails, and a low cabin, which is generally divided into two or more apartments, having small square windows, which are furnished with blinds, or glasses, and sliding shutters in the inside. In our boat we were exceedingly worried by beetles, bugs, and fleas; and these seriously annoyed me on account of my poor children, whose rest was sadly disturbed, and their very patience and cheerfulness increased our sympathy. Indeed, these young wayfarers made us cast many a longing wish for their sakes towards the comforts of a home.

During the nights our musquito curtains diminished but did not remove the inconvenience; but they are invaluable, as they prevent all attacks from large reptiles, although bugs and fleas are proof against all precaution.

The boats belonging to the Turkish grandees are very gay: bunches of flowers are commonly painted on the panels of the cabin, both within and without; and the blood-red flag, with its white crescent

and star or stars, waves at the stern. Other boats are more simple in their decorations, and all extremely picturesque.

On this day of our voyage, we passed little worthy of remark, excepting, indeed, the groups of noble and graceful palm trees, which form a characteristic and beautiful feature in every Egyptian landscape. The villages presented a curious effect, from almost every hut being crowned with a conical pigeon-house, constructed of earthen pots. With these cones, frequently as large as the huts themselves, almost every village hereabouts abounds.

We observed many carcasses of cattle floating upon the water, or lying by the banks of the river, for Egypt is at present visited by a severe murrain.*

During our voyage we saw several instances of mirage (called by the Arabs *seráb*); but the apparent clearness of the mock water destroyed the illusion; for the Nile, generally turbid, was then particularly so; and it was impossible to strain the imagination so far as to conceive that a *clear* lake should exist near the banks of the river. Yet it was an interesting and curious phenomenon, and indeed rendered painfully interesting by the

* This murrain lasted more than three months, and reminded us of that in the time of Moses.

knowledge that many a perishing wanderer in the desert had bitterly tasted the disappointment its mimicry occasions.

I can say little of the beauty of the banks of the Nile. They are in many places sufficiently high to obstruct the view, and broken and perpendicular. The Delta side certainly often presented to the eye a sloping bank of refreshing green, but with scarcely any diversity. I am not disposed to underrate the prospect; but you have doubtless heard that the borders of the Nile are seen in all their beauty about a month after the decrease of the river, which has left its fertilizing soil for a considerable space on either side, when its banks seem covered with a carpet of the brightest emerald green, and its little islands are crowned with the most brilliant verdure.

Our voyage was made during its increase; and when, on the third night, our boat was made fast to a sandy island, no village being in the neighbourhood under which the Reyyis thought we could safely pass the night, we all congratulated ourselves and each other that our boating was nearly at an end.

Early on the following morning we descried the venerable Pyramids, but the undulations of the heated atmosphere on the surface of the intermediate plain prevented their being distinctly visible. They were three leagues distant.



A Turkish Lady in the Riding-Attire of Egypt.

We shortly after arrived at Boulak, the principal port of Cairo, and with our arrival came the necessity that I and my sister-in-law should equip ourselves in Eastern costume. There was no small difficulty in this ceremony, and when completed, it was stifling to a degree, not to be forgotten. Imagine the face covered closely by a muslin veil, double at the upper part, the eyes only uncovered, and over a dress of coloured silk an overwhelming covering of black silk, extending, in my idea, in every direction ; so that, having nothing free but my eyes, I looked with dismay at the high bank I must climb, and the donkey I must mount, which was waiting for me at the summit. Nothing can be more awkward and uncomfortable than this riding dress ; and if I had any chance of attaining my object without assuming it, I should never adopt it ; but in English costume I should not gain admittance into many hareems : besides, the knowledge that a Muslim believes a curse to rest on the “ seer and the seen,” makes one anxious not to expose passers-by to what they would deem a misfortune, or ourselves to their malediction.

My brother, in his ‘ Modern Egyptians,’ has represented the manner in which the hábarah is worn by the native ladies of Egypt. The Turkish ladies close it in front, esteeming it improper to show the colour of the sebleh or tób beneath.

The house dress is well suited to the climate and extremely picturesque, but the walking dress is grotesque and curious.

With a short account of our ride of nearly two miles from Boulak to Cairo, I shall conclude.

All mounted, and preceded by a janissary, we looked in wonder, as we rode through Boulak, at the dilapidated state of this suburb. There are, indeed, good houses there, I am assured, but we had not the good fortune to see them, and we emerged gladly from its narrow streets to an open space, where soon, however, the dust (which rose in clouds from the tread of our easy-paced donkeys) so annoyed us, that for the first time I felt it desirable that nothing but the eyes should be uncovered. At length we fairly entered Cairo, and my astonishment increased tenfold.

I wrote to you that the streets of Alexandria are narrow; they are *wide* when compared with those of Cairo. The meshreebeeyehs, or projecting windows, facing each other, above the ground-floors, literally touch in *some* instances; and in *many*, the opposite windows are within reach.

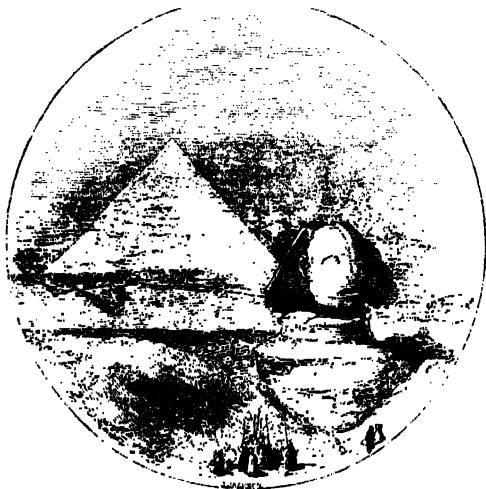
The first impression received on entering this celebrated city, is, that it has the appearance of having been deserted for perhaps a century, and suddenly repeopled by persons who had been unable, from poverty or some other cause, to repair

it, and clear away its antiquated cobwebs. I never saw such cobwebs as hung in many apertures, in gloomy dark festoons, leading me to consider the unmolested condition of their tenants. I wish I could say that I do not fear these creatures; but surely in the insect world there is nothing so savage-looking as a black thick-legged spider.

After passing through several of the streets, into which it appeared as though the dwellings had turned out nearly all their inhabitants, we arrived at an agreeable house situated in the midst of gardens, in which we are to take up our temporary abode. Graceful palm-trees, loaded with their fruit, meet our eyes in every direction, while acacias, bananas, orange and lemon trees, pomegranate-trees, and vines, form a splendid variety, and but for one essential drawback, the coup d'œil would be charming. This drawback is the want of refreshing showers. The foliage on which we look is perfectly covered with dust, and the soil of the gardens is watered by a wheel worked by a patient bullock who pursues his round-about with little intermission, and thrives in his persevering labour.

The plan of the gardens is very curious; they are divided by long parallel walks, with gutters on either side, and subdivided into little square compartments, each about two yards wide, by ridges of earth about half a foot high, and the water is admitted into these squares, one after

another. When I looked upon the little ditches and squares of water, remaining for some time without absorption, I could not but remember our bright pretty gardens in England, and how carefully in watering our flowers we avoided saturating the mould, both because it would be injurious to them, and displeasing to the eye—and these recollections almost brought me to the conclusion that a garden in Egypt is not worth the trouble of cultivation—so much for national prejudice and love of home scenes. Adieu !



Pyramid and Sphinx.

LETTER IV.

Cairo, August, 1842.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

ALTHOUGH prepared by the motley groups at Malta, and the changing scene and variety of costume at Alexandria, for much that is more astonishing to the European in Cairo, I find the peculiarities of this place and people are beyond my most extravagant expectations. The Shubra road passes very near our windows, and I am constantly attracted by the various processions which wind their way to and from this city.

The wedding processions, in which the poor bride walks under a canopy of silk, not only veiled, but enveloped in a large shawl, between two other females, amuse me much; while the tribe before the "destined one," occasionally demonstrate their joy by executing many possible; and, to our ideas, many impossible feats, and the rear is brought up by the contributions of children from many of the houses *en route*. The bride must, indeed, be nearly suffocated long before she reaches her destination, for she has to walk, frequently almost fainting, under a mid-day sun, sometimes a long dis-

tance, while a few musicians make what is considered melody with drums and shrill hautboys, and attending females scream their zaghâreet (or quavering cries of joy), in deafening discord in her train.

The funeral processions distress me. The corpse of a man is carried in an open bier, with merely a shawl thrown over the body, through which the form is painfully visible. The body of a woman is carried in a covered bier over which a shawl is laid ; and an upright piece of wood, covered also with a shawl and decorated with ornaments belonging to the female head-dress, rises from the forepart. The corpses of children are borne on this latter kind of bier.

One sound that I heard as a funeral procession approached, I can never forget ; it was a cry of such deep sorrow—a sob of such heartfelt distress, that it was clearly distinguished from the wail of the hired women who joined the funeral chorus. We were immediately drawn to the windows, and saw a man leading a procession of women, and bearing in his arms a little dead infant, wrapt merely in a shawl, and travelling to its last earthly home. The cry of agony proceeded, I conclude, from its mother, and could only be wrung from a nearly bursting heart. Contend against me who may, I must ever maintain my opinion, that no love is so deep, no attachment so strong, as that of mother to child, and of child to mother.

The funerals that pass are very numerous ; but other spectacles that I see from my windows afford various and endless entertainment, and make me long to look into the houses of this most curious city, as well as into the streets and roads. After much consideration, however, I have determined to defer my intended visits to the hareems of the great, until I shall have acquired some little knowledge of Arabic ; for although Turkish is the language usually spoken in those hareems, Arabic is generally understood by the inmates, and as the latter is the common language of Egypt, some knowledge of it is indispensable to me.

But our first object has been to find a comfortable dwelling ; and notwithstanding the kind assistance of numerous friends, my brother has experienced great difficulty in attaining this object. The friendly attention that has been shown to us all is most highly gratifying ; and I have already had some experience of the manners and usages of the hareem ; two Syrian ladies having devoted themselves in the most amiable manner to render us every possible service.

After having searched for a house here during a month in vain, we were delighted by the offer of an exceedingly good one, which appeared in almost every respect eligible, and in which we are now residing. But our domestic comfort in this new abode has been disturbed by a singular trouble.

which has obliged us to arrange as soon as possible for a removal. The house is an admirable one, being nearly new, though on the old construction ; therefore I shall endeavour to give you an idea of the better houses of Cairo by describing this, and some knowledge of the plan of its interior will enable you more fully to understand the annoyance to which we are subjected.

On the ground-floor is a court, open to the sky, round which the apartments extend, gallery above gallery. Round the court are five rooms ; one large room (a mandarrah) intended for the reception of male guests, with a fountain in the centre ; a winter room ; a small sleeping-room, for any male guest ; a kitchen, and a coffee-room, for servants. On the right hand, immediately on entering the street-door, is the door of the hareem, or the entrance to the stairs leading to the ladies' apartments ; the whole of the house, excepting the apartments of the ground-floor, being considered as the " hareem." On the first floor is a marble-paved chamber, with a roof open towards the north, and sloping upwards, conveying into the chamber generally a delightful breeze. There are also five other rooms on the first floor ; and in each of the two principal apartments, the greater portion of the floor, forming about three-fourths, is raised from five to six inches, the depressed portion being paved with marble. The reason for thus

laying the floors is, that the outer slippers are left on the depressed portion, and the raised part, which is matted, is not to be defiled with anything which is unclean. The feet are covered, in addition to the stockings, with a kind of inner slippers, the soles of which, as well as the upper leathers, are of yellow morocco: they are called mezz; and the outer slippers, which are without heels, are styled báboog. The latter, by the way, I am often losing, and I fear I shall continue to do so, for I despair of learning to shuffle, like the ladies of the country. When wearing the riding or walking dress, the mezz are exchanged for a pair of high morocco socks, and the báboog are worn as usual. They are always pale yellow. The walls throughout are whitewashed, and the ceilings composed of fancifully carved woodwork, in some instances extremely tastefully arranged. Besides the rooms I have mentioned, there are three small marble-paved apartments, forming, *en suite*, an antechamber, a reclining chamber, and a bath. We little thought, when we congratulated ourselves on this luxury, that it would become the most abominable part of the house. Above are four rooms, the principal one opening to a delightful terrace, which is considerably above most of the surrounding houses; and on this we enjoy our breakfast and supper under the clearest sky in the world; but we always remember that the sweet air which com-

forts us in the mornings and evenings of our sultry days, blows from the direction of our own dear country ; and the thought renders it the more welcome.

We were much surprised, after passing a few days here, to find that our servants were unable to procure any rest during the night ; being disturbed by a constant knocking, and by the appearances of what they believed to be an 'Efreet, that is, "an evil spirit," but the term 'Efreet is often used to signify "a ghost." The manner of the servants' complaint of the latter was very characteristic. Having been much annoyed one morning by a noisy quarrel under our windows, my brother called one of our servants to ascertain how it had arisen, when he replied, "It is a matter of no importance, O Efendee, but the subject which perplexes us is that there is a devil in the bath." My brother being aware of their superstitious prejudices, replied, "Well, is there a bath in the world that you do not believe to be a resort of evil spirits, according to the well-known tradition on that subject?" "True, O my master," rejoined the man, "the case is so ; this devil has long been the resident of the house, and he will never permit any other tenant to retain its quiet possession ; for a long time no one has remained more than a month within these walls, excepting the last person who lived here, and he, though he had

soldiers and slaves, could not stay longer than about nine months; for the devil disturbed his family all night." I must here tell you that during our short stay in the house, two maids had left us, one after another, without giving us any idea of their intentions, and had never returned, and the cause of their sudden disappearance was now explained by the men, their fellow-servants. Certainly our own rest had been grievously disturbed; but we had attributed all the annoyance to a neighbour's extraordinary demonstrations of joy on the subject of his own marriage, and whose festivities were perhaps the more extravagant because he is an old man, and his bride a young girl: but as I hope to give you a particular account, on a future occasion, of the manner in which the people of this country celebrate a marriage, suffice it to say at present, the noise was deafening during the *whole* of eight nights, and that, when we were becoming accustomed to the constant din, we were roused by three tremendous reports of fire-arms, which rang through the apartments of our own and the neighbouring houses, and shook our dwelling to the very foundation. It is therefore not remarkable that we did not hear the noises which disturbed our poor servants, in addition to the sufficient uproar without.

It appeared, on inquiry, that the man to whom this house formerly belonged, and who is now

dead, had, during his residence in it, murdered a poor tradesman who entered the court with his merchandise, and two slaves: one of these (a black girl) was destroyed in the bath, and you will easily understand how far *such* a story as this, and a *true* one too, sheds its influence on the minds of a people who are superstitious to a proverb. We can only regret that my brother engaged the house in ignorance of these circumstances; had he known them, he would also have been aware that the prejudice among the lower orders would be insurmountable, and that no female servant would remain with us. The sudden disappearance of our maids was thus quaintly explained by our door-keeper. "Why did A'mineh and Zeyneb leave you? Verily, O my master, because they feared for their security. When A'mineh saw the 'Efreet she said at once, 'I must quit this house; for if he touch me, I shall be deranged, and unfit for service;' and truly," he added, "this would have been the case. For ourselves, as men, we fear not; but we fear for the harem. Surely you will consider their situation, and quit this house." This (he thought) was putting the matter in the strongest light. "Try a few nights longer," my brother said, "and call me as soon as the 'Efreet appears to-night; we might have caught him last night, when you say he was so near you, and after giving him a sound beating, you would not have found

your rest disturbed." At this remark it was evident that the respect of both servants for their master had received a temporary shock. "O Efendee," exclaimed one of them, "this is an 'Efreet, and not a son of Adam, as you seem to suppose. He assumed last night all imaginary shapes, and when I raised my hand to seize him, he became a piece of cord, or any other trifle." Now these men are valuable servants, and we should be sorry to lose them, especially in our present predicament; therefore my brother merely answered, that if the annoyance did not cease, he would make inquiry respecting another house. But to obtain a house, excepting in the heart of the city, is no easy matter; and on account of my children, we feel it to be indispensable for the preservation of their health that we should reside on the west side of the city, and close to the outskirts, where the air is pure and salubrious, and where Ibraheem Pasha has caused the mounds of rubbish to be removed, and succeeded by extensive plantations of olive, palm, cypress, acacia, and other trees. These plantations are open to the public, and form a charming place of resort for children.

I have not mentioned to you that the inhuman wretch to whom this house belonged bequeathed it to a mosque, perhaps as an expiation for his crimes, but left it, for the term of her life, to the person who is our present landlady; and now a circum-

stance was explained to our minds which we had not before fully understood. On the day before we desired to remove here, we sent one of our servants to hire* some women, and to superintend the clearing of the house; and on his arrival there, the landlady (whose name is Lálah-Zár, or bed of tulips) refused him admission, saying, "Return to the Efendee, and say to him that I am baking cakes in the oven of his kitchen, that I may give them away *to-morrow* at the tomb of the late owner of the house, to the poor and needy. This is a meritorious act for your master's sake, as well as for my own, and your master will understand it."

Poor woman! it is now evident to us that she hoped by this act of propitiation to prevent further annoyance to her tenants, and consequent loss to herself.

The morning after the conversation I have related took place, the servants' report was considerably improved. They had passed, they said, a comfortable night, and we hoped we might arrange to remain here, but the following day a most singular statement awaited us. The door-keeper, in a tone of considerable alarm, said that he had been unable to sleep at all; that the 'Efreet had walked round the gallery all night in *clogs*!*

* Clogs are always worn in the bath.

and had repeatedly knocked at his door with a brick, or some other hard substance. Then followed the question why one of the men had not called my brother, evidently because neither of them dared pass the gallery round which the supposed 'Efreet was taking his midnight walk, striking each door violently as he passed it. For many nights these noises continued, and many evenings they began before we retired to rest, and as we could never find the offender, I sadly feared for my children; not for their personal safety, but lest they should incline to superstition, and nothing impoverishes the mind so much as such a tendency.

Another singular circumstance attending this most provoking annoyance was our finding, on several successive mornings, five or six pieces of charcoal laid at the door leading to the chambers in which we sleep; conveying in this country a wish, or rather an imprecation, which is far from agreeable; viz. "May your faces be blackened." However, under all these circumstances, I rejoiced to find my children increasingly amused by these pranks, and established in the belief that one or more wicked persons liked the house so well, that they resolved to gain possession, and to eject by dint of sundry noises, and other annoyances, any persons who desire its occupation. It is, however, a more serious matter to poor Lálah-Zár than to us;

for it is very certain that the legacy of the late possessor will never prove a great benefit either to her or to the mosque. You will be surprised when I tell you that the rent of such a house as this does not exceed £12 per annum. It is a very superior house, and infinitely beyond the usual run of houses, therefore always styled by the people of the country, the house of an Kameer (a Nobleman).

One thing we much regretted, that A'mineh (whom I mentioned early in this letter) had taken fright. She was the best of our maids; and her gentle respectful manners, and the perfect propriety of her demeanour, made her a very desirable attendant. I am sorry to say we have met with no other, but those who have proved themselves in every respect inefficient. The men-servants are excellent, and become attached to their masters almost invariably, when treated as they deserve; but as to the maids, I scarcely know how to describe them. I really do not think they hardly ever wash themselves, excepting when they go to the bath, which is once in about ten days or a fortnight. On these occasions a complete scouring takes place (I can find no other term for the operation of the bath), and their long hair is arranged in many small plaits: from that time until the next visit to the bath, their hair is never unplaited. I speak from having watched with dismay all we have had,

excepting A'mineh, who was a jewel among them, and from the information of all our friends in this country. These maids are extremely deceitful, and when directed with regard to their work, will answer with the most abject submission, although really disheartened by the most ordinary occupation. They sleep in their clothes, after the manner of the country, and the habit of doing so, coupled with the neglect of proper washing, involving a want of that freshness produced by a complete change of clothes, is especially objectionable. Were they strict in their religious observances, their cleanliness would be secured, as frequent ablutions are ordered in their code of law; but the lower orders of the women have seldom any religion at all.

Believe me, you are fortunate in England, in this respect, as well as many others, and I hope you will prize our English maids, if you have not done so already.

LETTER V.

September, 1842.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

THAT you may be better prepared for future letters, you wish me to give you a general physical sketch of this most singular country, which is distinguished by its natural characteristics, as well as by its monuments of antiquity, from every other region of the globe. As my own experience will not enable me to do so, my brother has promised to furnish me with the necessary information.

The country (as well as the metropolis) is called Masr, by its modern inhabitants. It is generally divided into Upper and Lower. Upper Egypt, or the Sa'eed, may be described as a long winding valley, containing a soil of amazing fertility, bounded throughout its whole length by mountainous and sandy wastes.

Lower Egypt is an extensive plain, for the most part cultivated, and copiously supplied with moisture by the divided streams of the Nile, and by numerous canals. All the cultivable soil of Egypt owes its existence to the Nile, by which it is still annually augmented: for this river, when swollen

by the summer rains which regularly drench the countries between the northern limits of the Sennár and the equinoctial line, is impregnated with rich earth washed down from the mountains of Abyssinia and the neighbouring regions; and in its course through Nubia and Egypt, where rain is a rare phenomenon, it deposits a copious sediment, both in the channel in which it constantly flows, and upon the tracts which it annually inundates. It is every where bordered by cultivated fields, excepting in a few places, where it is closely hemmed in by the mountains, or the drifted sand of the desert. The mud of the Nile, analyzed by Regnault, was found to consist of 11 parts in 100 of water: 48 of alumine; 18 of carbonate of lime; 9 of carbon; 6 of oxide of iron; 4 of silix; and 4 of carbonate of magnesia.

The Nile is called in Egypt "El-Bahr" (or "the river"); for *bahr* signifies a "great river," as well as the sea. It is also called "Bahr en Neel" (or "the river Nile"), and "Neel Masr" (or "the Nile of Egypt"). The Arabs, generally, believe the "Neel Masr" to be a continuation of the "Neel es-Soodán" (or "Nile of the Negroes").

Of the two great branches, called "El-Bahr el-Azrak" (or "the blue river"), and "El-Bahr el-Abyad" (or "the white river"), which, uniting, form the Nile of Nubia and Egypt, the former (though less long than the other) is that to which

Egypt principally owes its fertility. Its chief characteristics (its colour, the banks between which it flows, &c.) are similar to those of the Nile of Egypt. Its dark colour, arising from its being impregnated with soil during the greater part of the year, has caused it to receive the name of "the blue river," while the other branch, from the opposite colour of its waters, is called "the white river." The latter is considerably wider than the former; its banks are sloping lawns, richly wooded, and very unlike the steep and broken banks of the Nile of Egypt.

At its entrance into the valley of Egypt, the Nile is obstructed by innumerable rocks of granite, which cause a succession of cataracts, or rather rapids. The mountains on the east of the river, as well as the islands in it, are here of granite: those on the western side are of sandstone. From this point, to the distance of thirty leagues southward, sandstone mountains of small altitude extend on each side of the river. The valley, so far, is very narrow, particularly throughout the upper half of the sandstone district; and there is but very little cultivable land on the banks of the river in that part; in some places the mountains are close to the stream; and in others, only a narrow sandy strip intervenes. At the distance of twelve leagues below the cataracts, the river is contracted to little more than half its usual width, by the mountains

on each side. Here are extensive quarries, from which were taken the materials for the construction of many of the temples in the Thebais. This part is called "Gebel es-Silsileh," or "the Mountain of the Chain." Where the calcareous district begins, are two insulated hills (El-Gebeleyn) on the west of the Nile; one of them close to the river, and the other at a little distance behind the former. The valley then becomes wider, and more irregular in its direction; and the Nile winds through the middle of the cultivable land, or nearly so. Afterwards the valley assumes a less serpentine form, and the river flows along the eastern side; in many places washing the sides of the precipitous mountains. The calcareous district continues to the end of the valley, where the mountains on both sides diverge; the Arabian chain running due east to Suez, and the western hills extending in a north-west direction, towards the Mediterranean. Near the termination of the valley is an opening in the low western mountains, through which a canal conveys the waters of the Nile into the fertile province of El-Fciyoom. On the north-west of this province is a great lake, which receives the superfluous waters during the inundation. The length of the valley of Egypt, from the cataracts to the metropolis, is about 450 geographical miles. The distance by the river is above 500 miles from the cataracts to the metropolis, and about 400 miles

from Thebes to the same point. The difference in latitude between the cataracts and the metropolis is six degrees, or 360 geographical miles; and the distance from the latter point to the sea, in a straight line, is rather more than ninety miles. The width of the valley is in few parts more than eight or ten miles; and generally less than that. The width of that part of Lower Egypt which constituted the ancient Delta, is about 120 miles from east to west.

The whole of the fertile country is very flat; but the lands in the vicinity of the river are rather higher than those which are more remote. This has been supposed to result from a greater deposit of mud upon the former; which, however, cannot be the case, for it is observed that the fields near the river are generally above the reach of the inundation, while those towards the mountains are abundantly overflowed; but while the latter yield but one crop, the former are cultivated throughout the whole year; and it is the constant cultivation and frequent watering (which is done by artificial means) that so considerably raise the soil; not so much by the deposit of mud left by the water, as by the accumulation of stubble and manure. The cultivable soil throughout Egypt is free from stones, excepting in parts immediately adjacent to the desert. It almost everywhere abounds with nitre.

Between the cultivable land and the mountains, there generally intervenes a desert space, too high to be inundated. This tract partly consists of sand and pebbles, covering a bed of rock, and partly of drifted sand which has encroached on the cultivable soil. In some places, this desert space is two or three miles in width.

The extent of the cultivated land in Egypt, my brother calculates to be equal to rather more than one square degree and a half: in other words 5,500 square geographical miles.* This is less than half the extent of the land which is comprised within the confines of the desert; for many parts within the limits of the cultivable land are too high to be inundated, and consequently are not cultivated; and other parts, particularly in Lower Egypt, are occupied by lakes, or marshes, or drifted sand. Allowance also must be made for the space which is occupied by towns and villages, the river, canals, &c. Lower Egypt comprises about the

* He made this calculation from a list of all the towns and villages in Egypt, and the extent of cultivated land belonging to each. This list is appended to De Saey's "*Abd Al-latif*." It was made in the year of the Flight 777 (A.D. 1375-6); and may be rather underrated than the reverse. The estimate of M. Mengin shows that in 1821 the extent of the cultivated land was much less; but since that period, considerable tracts of waste land have been rendered fertile.

same extent of cultivated land as the whole of Upper Egypt.*

The annual inundation irrigates the land sufficiently for one crop ; but not without any labour of the fellah (or agriculturist) : for care must be taken to detain the water by means of dams, or it would subside too soon. The highest rise of the Nile ever known would scarcely be sufficient if the waters were allowed to drain off the fields when the river itself falls. A very high rise of the Nile is, indeed, an event not less calamitous than a very scanty rise ; for it overflows vast tracts of land which cannot be drained, it washes down many of the mud-built villages, the huts of which are composed of unburnt bricks, and occasions an awful loss of lives as well as property. Moreover the plague seldom visits Egypt excepting after a very high rise of the Nile. It is, however, far from being an *invariable* consequence of such an event. When the river begins to rise, all the canals are cleared out, each is closed by a dam of earth at the entrance, and opened when the Nile has nearly attained its greatest height, towards the end of September. When the river begins to fall the canals are closed again, that they may retain the water. The lands that are not inundated by the over-

* The term "sharákee" is applied to those lands which are above the reach of the inundation, and the term "rei" to the rest.



Island on the Nile, and Nilometer (Gill-Measurer), near Cairo.

flowing of the Nile are irrigated artificially, if sufficiently near to the river, or to a canal.

As all the cultivable soil of Egypt has been deposited by the river, it might be expected that the land would at length rise so high as to be above the reach of the inundation ; but the bed of the river rises at the same time, and in the same degree.

At Thebes, the Nile rises about thirty-six feet ; at the cataracts about forty ; at Rosetta, owing to the proximity of the mouth, it only rises to the height of about three feet and a half. The Nile begins to rise in the end of June, or the beginning of July ; that is to say, about, or soon after, the summer solstice, and attains its greatest height in the end of September, or sometimes (but rarely) in the beginning of October ; that is, in other words, about or soon after the autumnal equinox. During the first three months of its decrease, it loses about half the height it had attained ; and during the remaining six months, it falls more and more slowly. It generally remains not longer than three or four days at its maximum, and the same length of time at its minimum : it may therefore be said to be three months on the increase, and nine months gradually falling. It often remains without any apparent increase or diminution, at other times than those of its greatest or least elevation, and is subject to other slight irregularities.

The Nile becomes turbid a little before its rise is apparent, and soon after it assumes a green hue, which it retains more than a fortnight. Its water is extremely delicious even when it is most impregnated with earth ; but *then* the Egyptians (excepting the lower orders) usually leave it to settle before they drink it, and put it in porous earthen bottles, which cool it by evaporation. While the Nile is green, the people generally abstain from drinking the water fresh from the river, having recourse to a supply previously drawn, and kept in cisterns.

The width of the Nile where there are no islands is in few parts more than half a mile. The branches which enclose the Delta are not so wide, generally speaking, as the undivided stream above ; and the river is as wide in most parts of Upper Egypt as in the lower extremity of the valley.

The rapidity of the current when the waters are low is not greater than the rate of a mile and a quarter in an hour ; but during the higher state of the river, the current is very rapid, and while vessels with furled sails are carried down by the stream with great speed, others ascend the river at an almost equal rate, favoured by the strong northerly winds, which prevail most when the current is most rapid. When the river is low, the wind from the north is often more powerful than

the current, and vessels cannot then descend the stream even with the help of oars.

I believe that I shall have occasion to add a few more words on the Nile some days hence, when I hope to send you the remainder of the general sketch.

Meanwhile, believe me to remain, &c.

LETTER VI.

October 13th, 1842.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

SINCE I last wrote to you, the weather has continued intensely hot ; but during the last three days almost constant lightning throughout the evening, though succeeded by excessive heat during the nights, has given us hope of speedy relief. This heat is attributed to the present state of the Nile, which has continued most unusually increasing up to this time (the 13th of October), and given rise to serious apprehensions ; for unless the water drain quickly off the land when the river begins to fall, it is feared that a severe plague may ensue. In such a case, we propose going up to Thebes for four months, but we earnestly hope it may please Almighty God to avert so dreadful a calamity as a pestilence must inevitably prove. I now resume the sketch I left unfinished in my last letter.

The climate of Egypt is generally very salubrious. The extraordinary dryness of the atmosphere (excepting in the maritime parts) is proved by the wonderful state of preservation in which bread,

meal, fruits, &c. have been found in the tombs of ancient Thebes, after having been deposited there two or three thousand years. The ancient monuments of Egypt have suffered very little from the weather: the colours with which some of them are adorned retain almost their pristine brightness. There arises from the waters of the fields a considerable exhalation (though not often visible), during the inundation, and for some months afterwards; but even then it seems perfectly dry immediately within the skirts of the desert, where most of the monuments of antiquity are situated.*

The heat in Egypt is very great; but not so oppressive as might be imagined, on account of that extreme dryness of the atmosphere of which I have spoken, and the prevalence of northerly breezes.†

Rain is a very rare phenomenon in the valley of Egypt. In the Sa'eed, a heavy rain falls not

* The damp at this period, slight as it is, occasions ophthalmia, diarrhoea, and dysentery, to be more prevalent now than at other times.

† The general height of the thermometer (Fahrenheit's) in Lower Egypt during the hot season, at noon, and in the shade, is from 90° to 100° ; in Upper Egypt, from 100° to 110° ; and in Nubia, from 110° to 120° , and even 130° , though in few years. In the latter country, if placed in the sand and exposed to the sun, the thermometer often rises to 150° or more. The temperature of Lower Egypt in the depth of winter is from 50° to 60° .

oftener, on the average, than once in four or five years. My brother witnessed such an occurrence at Thebes, a tremendous storm of lightning and rain, in the autumn of 1827. Lightning is frequently seen, but thunder is seldom heard. On that occasion it was quite terrific, and lasted throughout a whole night. The torrents which pour down the sides and ravines of the naked mountains which hem in the valley of Egypt, on these occasions, though so rare, leave very conspicuous traces. Here, in Cairo, and in the neighbouring parts, there fall on the average four or five smart showers in the year, and those generally during the winter and spring. Most unusually (but this is in every respect an unusual season), it rained heavily on the night of the 30th of September. A heavy rain very rarely falls, and when it does, much damage is done to the houses. In the maritime parts of Egypt, rain is not so unfrequent.

The prevalence of the north-westerly wind is one of the most remarkable advantages of climate the Egyptians enjoy. The north-west breeze is ever refreshing and salubrious, beneficial to vegetation, and of the greatest importance in facilitating the navigation of the Nile at almost every season of the year, and particularly during that period when the river is rising, and the current consequently the most rapid. During the first three

months of the decrease of the river, that is, from the autumnal equinox to the winter-solstice, the wind is rather variable ; sometimes blowing from the west, south, or east ; but still the northerly winds are most frequent. During the next three months, the wind is more variable ; and during the last three months of the decrease of the river, from the vernal equinox to the summer solstice, winds from the south, or south-east, often hot and very oppressive, are frequent, but of short duration.

During a period called "El-Khamáseen," hot southerly winds are very frequent, and particularly noxious. This period is said to commence on the day after the Coptic festival of Easter-Sunday, and to terminate on Whit-Sunday ; thus continuing forty-nine days. It generally begins in the latter part of April, and lasts during the whole of May. This is the most unhealthy season in Egypt ; and while it lasts the inhabitants are apprehensive of being visited by the plague ; but their fears cease on the termination of that period. It is remarkable that we have already suffered much from hot wind, for it is most unusual at this season. During July and August it was frequently distressing ; and I can only compare it to the blast from a furnace, rendering every article of furniture literally hot, and always continuing three days. Having, happily, glass windows, we closed them in the direction of the wind, and found the close atmosphere infinitely

more bearable than the heated blast. This was a season of extreme anxiety, being quite an unexpected ordeal for my children; but, I thank God, excepting slight indisposition, they escaped unhurt.

The "Samoom," which is a very violent, hot, and almost suffocating wind, is of more rare occurrence than the Khamáseen winds, and of shorter duration; its continuance being more brief in proportion to the intensity of its parching heat, and the impetuosity of its course. Its direction is generally from the south-east, or south-south-east. It is commonly preceded by a fearful calm. As it approaches, the atmosphere assumes a yellowish hue, tinged with red; the sun appears of a deep blood colour, and gradually becomes quite concealed before the hot blast is felt in its full violence. The sand and dust raised by the wind add to the gloom, and increase the painful effects of the heat and rarity of the air. Respiration becomes uneasy, perspiration seems to be entirely stopped; the tongue is dry, the skin parched, and a prickling sensation is experienced, as if caused by electric sparks. It is sometimes impossible for a person to remain erect, on account of the force of the wind; and the sand and dust oblige all who are exposed to it to keep their eyes closed. It is, however, most distressing when it overtakes travellers in the desert. My brother encountered at Koos, in Upper Egypt, a samoom which was said to be one of the

most violent ever witnessed. It lasted less than half an hour, and a very violent samoom seldom continues longer. My brother is of opinion that, although it is extremely distressing, it can never prove fatal, unless to persons already brought almost to the point of death by disease, fatigue, thirst, or some other cause. The poor camel seems to suffer from it equally with his master; and will often lie down with his back to the wind, close his eyes, stretch out his long neck upon the ground, and so remain until the storm has passed over.

Another very remarkable phenomenon is the "Zóba'ah," and very common in Egypt, and in the adjacent deserts. It is a whirlwind, which raises the sand or dust in the form of a pillar, generally of immense height.* These whirling pillars of sand (of which my brother has seen more than twelve in one day, and often two or three at a time during the spring) are carried

* "I measured" (says my brother) "the height of a zóba'ah, with a sextant, at Thebes, under circumstances which insured a very near approximation to perfect accuracy (observing its altitude from an elevated spot, at the precise moment when it passed through, and violently agitated, a distant group of palm-trees), and found it to be seven hundred and fifty feet. I think that several zóba'ahs I have seen were of greater height. Others which I measured at the same place were between five and seven hundred feet in height."—*Modern Egyptians*, 3rd Edition, Part I. chap. x.

sometimes with very great rapidity across the deserts and fields of Egypt, and over the river. My brother's boat was twice crossed by a zóba'ah ; but on each occasion its approach was seen, and necessary precautions were taken : both the sails were let fly a few moments before it reached the boat ; but the boxes and cushions in the cabin were thrown down by the sudden heeling of the vessel, and everything was covered with sand and dust.

The "Saráb," called by Europeans "mirage," which resembles a lake, and is so frequently seen in the desert, tantalizing the thirsty traveller, I mentioned to you in a former letter. The illusion is often perfect, the objects within and beyond the apparent lake being reflected by it with the utmost precision. You probably know that the reflection is produced by a heated stratum of air upon the glowing surface of a plain, and you may have seen something of the same kind in England.

The fields in the vicinity of the river, and of the great canals, are irrigated by means of machines at all seasons of the year, if not subject to the natural inundation. For a description of these, I refer you to the 'Modern Egyptians,' 3rd edition, Part II. chap. i. ; and I will now conclude this letter with a concise physical and agricultural *calendar* of Egypt, drawn up by my brother from Arabic works, and from his own observations.

January.—The mean temperature in the after-

noon during this month at Cairo is about 60°. The waters which, during the season of the inundation, had been retained upon the fields by means of dams, have now sunk into the soil; but water still remains in some of the large canals, their mouths having been stopped up. The river has lost about half the height it had attained; that is to say, it has sunk about twelve feet in and about the latitude of Cairo. The wind at this season, and throughout the winter, is very variable; but the northerly winds are most frequent. People should now abstain from eating fowls, and all crude and cold vegetables. The poppy is sown. It is unwholesome to drink water during the night at this season, and throughout the winter. The fifth Coptic month (Toobeh) begins on the 8th or 9th of January.* Now is the season of extreme cold. Beef should not be eaten at this period. The fields begin to be covered with verdure. The vines are trained. Carrots plentiful. Onions sown. The date-palm sown. The ripe sugar-canes cut.

February.—The mean temperature in the afternoon during this month at Cairo is about 66°.

* See a note on the beginning of the first Coptic month, in September. The Egyptians (Muslims as well as Christians) still divide the seasons by the Coptic months; but for dates, in their writings, they generally use the lunar Mohammedan months.

End of the season of extreme cold.* The fields everywhere throughout Egypt are covered with verdure. The sixth Coptic month (Amsheer) begins on the 7th or 8th of February. Warm water should be drunk fasting at this season. The wind very variable. The harvest of beans. The pomegranate tree blossoms. Vines are planted. Trees put forth their leaves. The season of the winds which bring rain, called el-Cawákeh. The cold ceases to be severe.

March.—Mean temperature in the afternoon during this month, at Cairo, about 68°. End of the season for planting trees. The seventh Coptic month (Barmahát) begins on the 9th of March. Variable and tempestuous winds. THE VERNAL EQUINOX. During the quarter now commencing the river continues decreasing; the wind often blows from the south or south-east; and the samoom winds (from the same quarters) occur most frequently during this period; the plague also generally visits Egypt at this season, if at all. The weather becomes mild. Northerly winds become prevalent. The wheat-harvest begins. Lentils are reaped; cotton, sesame, and indigo sown; and the sugar-cane planted. The barley-harvest begins.

* Such is the statement of the Egyptian almanacks; but there are generally as cold days in the month of Amsheer as in Toobeh, and sometimes colder.

April.—Mean temperature in the afternoon during this month, at Cairo, about 76°. Time for taking medicine. The eighth Coptic month (Bar-moodeh) begins on the 8th of April. Samoom winds. Time for the fecundation of the date-palm. Rice sown. The wheat-harvest in Lower Egypt. Beginning of the first season for sowing millet. The Khamáseen winds generally commence in this month.

May.—Mean temperature in the afternoon during this month, at Cairo, about 85°. The Khamáseen winds prevail principally during this month; and the season is consequently unhealthy. Winter clothing disused. The ninth Coptic month (Bes-hens) begins on the 8th of May. Time for taking medicine, and losing blood. Season of the yellow water-melon. Cucumbers sown. The apricot bears; and the mulberry. Turnips sown. End of the first season for sowing millet. The apricot ripens. Beginning of the season of great heat. Beginning also of the season of the hot winds, called “el-ba-wáreh,” which prevail during forty days.

June.—Mean temperature in the afternoon during this month, at Cairo, about 94°. Strong northerly winds prevail about this time. The water of the Nile becomes turbid, but does not yet begin to rise. The tenth Coptic month (Ba-ooneh) begins on the 7th of June. The banana sown. Samoom winds. Strong perfumes (as musk, &c.)

are disused now, and throughout the summer. The yellow water-melon abundant. The plague, if any existed previously, now ceases. Honey collected. People should abstain from drinking the water of the Nile at this season for fifteen days,* unless first boiled. "The drop" (en nuk-tah) descends into the Nile, and, according to popular belief, causes it to increase soon after:† this is said to happen on the 11th of Ba-ooneh, which corresponds with the 17th of June: it is the day before the Coptic festival of Michael the Archangel. The flesh of the kid is preferred at this season, and until the end of summer. Samoom winds blow occasionally during a period of seventy days, now commencing. THE SUMMER SOLSTICE, when the day is fourteen hours long in Lower Egypt. During the quarter now beginning (*i. e.* during the period of the increase of the Nile) northerly winds prevail almost uninterruptedly, excepting at night, when it is generally calm. Though the heat is great, this quarter is the most healthy season of the year. The Nile begins to rise now, or a few days earlier or later. The season for grapes and figs commences. Peaches plentiful.

July.—Mean temperature in the afternoon

* Commencing from the 10th of Ba-ooneh (or the 16th of June).

† It is really a heavy dew which falls about this time.

during this month, at Cairo, about 98°. The rise of the Nile is now daily proclaimed in the metropolis. Locusts die, or disappear, in every part of Egypt. The eleventh Coptic month (Ebeeb) begins on the 7th of July. Violent northerly winds prevail for fifteen days.* Honey abundant. People should abstain from eating plentifully at this season. The noonday heat is now excessive. Ophthalmia prevails now, but not so much now as in the autumn. The bawāheer, or seven days of extreme heat, fall at the end of this month.† Grapes and figs abundant. Maize is now sown. Harvest of the first crop of millet. The date ripens.

August.—Mean temperature in the afternoon during this month, at Cairo, about 92°. Season for pressing grapes. The last Coptic month (Misra) begins on the 6th of August. Onions should not be eaten at this time. Radishes and carrots sown. Cold water should be drunk, fasting. Watermelons plentiful. The season for gathering cotton. The pomegranate ripens. Violent northerly winds. Sweetmeats should not be eaten at this time. “The wedding of the Nile” takes place on the

* Fleas disappear now; and if you can form a just idea of the annoyance they occasion, you will not think the insertion of this information unimportant.

† They are said to commence on the 20th of Ebeeb, of 26th of July.

14th, or one of the five following days of the month of Misra (the 19th to the 24th of August); this is when the dam of earth which closes the entrance of the canal of Cairo is broken down; it having been first announced that the river has risen (in the latitude of the metropolis) sixteen cubits, which is an exaggeration.* Second season for sowing millet. Musquitoes abound now. End of the seventy days in which samoom winds frequently occur.

September.—Mean temperature in the afternoon during this month, at Cairo, about 88°. White beet and turnip sown. Windy weather. The beginning of the month Toot—the first of the Coptic year; corresponding with the 10th or 11th of September, according as five or six intercalary days are added at the end of the Coptic year preceding.† Ripe dates abundant, and limes. Windy

* The true rise at this period is about 19 or 20 feet; the river, therefore, has yet to rise about 4 or 5 feet more, on the average.

† “Five intercalary days are added at the end of three successive years; and six at the end of the fourth year. The Coptic leap-year immediately precedes ours: therefore, the Coptic year begins on the 11th of September, only when it is the next after their leap-year; or when our next ensuing year is a leap-year: and consequently after the following February, the corresponding days of the Coptic and our months will be the same as in other years. The Copts begin their reckoning from the era of Diocletian, A.D. 284.” —*Modern Egyptians*, Part I., chap. ix.

weather. **THE AUTUMNAL EQUINOX.** The Nile is now, or a few days later, at its greatest height; and all the canals are opened. During the quarter now commencing (*i.e.* during the first three months of the decrease of the river), the wind is very variable; often blowing from the west, and sometimes from the south. The exhalations from the alluvial soil, in consequence of the inundation, occasion ophthalmia, diarrhœa, and dysentery to be more prevalent in this quarter than at other seasons. Harvest of sesame.

October.—Mean temperature in the afternoon during this month, at Cairo, about 80°. The leaves of trees become yellow. Green sugar-canes cut, to be sucked. Drinking water at night, after sleep, is pernicious at this season. The henna-leaves gathered. Winter vegetables sown. The second Coptic month (Bâbeh) begins on the 10th or 11th of October. Wheat, barley, lentils, beans, lupins, chick-peas, kidney-beans, trefoil, fenugreek, colewort, lettuce, and safflower are sown now, or a little later. Bleeding is injurious now. The dews resulting from the inundation increase.

November.—Mean temperature in the afternoon during this month, at Cairo, about 72°. The cold during the latter part of the night is now pernicious. The third Coptic month (Katoor) begins on the 9th or 10th of November. Rain is now expected in Lower Egypt. The “mereesee,” or

south wind, prevalent. The rice-harvest. The maize - harvest, and second harvest of millet. Winter-clothing assumed. Bananas plentiful.

December.—Mean temperature in the afternoon during this month, at Cairo, about 68°. Tempestuous and cloudy weather. Strong perfumes, as musk, ambergris, &c., are agreeable now. The fourth Coptic month (Kiyahk) begins on the 9th or 10th of December. The leaves of trees fall. THE WINTER SOLSTICE; when the day is ten hours long in Lower Egypt. The wind is variable during this quarter. Beginning of the season for planting trees. Fleas multiply. The vines are pruned. Beef is not considered wholesome food at this season.

LETTER VII.

October 18th, Ramadán, 1842

MY DEAR FRIEND,

THE leading topic of conversation in this country, at the present time, is the state of the Nile, which has hitherto (to the 18th of October) continued rising, and occasioned a general fear that a severe plague will ensue on the subsiding of the inundation. In 1818, it rose until the 16th of October; but never so late since that time, nor for a considerable period before. Our house is flooded in the lower part; and, in some of the streets of Cairo, the water is within a foot of the surface, while it has entered many of the houses.

This is the 12th day of Ramadán, or the month of abstinence; and I do heartily pity those who observe the fast, for the weather is again intensely hot, and it is marvellous how any person can observe the law, denying himself from daybreak to sunset even a draught of water. I really think there are very many conscientious fasters; and it would interest you exceedingly to walk through the streets of Cairo during this month, and observe the varieties of deportment visible among the

people. Some are sitting idly, holding an ornamented stick, or with a string of beads in their hands. Boys, fasting for the first time, and even men, are endeavouring to distract their attention with the most childish toys; while many are exhibiting, in various ways, that fasting does not improve their tempers.

Some days since, as it drew near the hour of sunset, an aged couple were passing near our present dwelling, the old woman leading her blind husband by the hand, and carrying his pipe, that it might be ready for him as soon as the law should allow him to enjoy it. Bent as they were by age and infirmity, it was sad to see that they were evidently among the fasters, and it was a sight to excite compassion and respect; for as so many of the aged sink into their last earthly home, when the month of abstinence has passed, the fear that they too might prove martyrs to the requirements of their religion was far from groundless, and naturally present to the mind of the observer.

The great among the Muslims in general turn night into day during Ramadán; therefore they are seldom seen in the streets. Most of them sleep from daybreak until the afternoon; while others break their fast in private. I do not think that this is done by the lower orders; and no one can hear the cry of joy which rings and echoes through the city at sunset, when, in token that the fasting

is over, for at least some hours, a cannon is discharged from the citadel, without rejoicing with the people, that another day of Ramadan has passed. But no sound is so imposing as the night-call to prayer from the numerous minarets. I mentioned to you our impressions on hearing it first at Alexandria; but here, in Cairo, it is infinitely more striking. On some occasions, when the wind is favourable, we can hear perhaps a hundred voices, in solemn, and indeed harmonious, concert. Here the Mueddins, raised between earth and heaven, call on their fellow-creatures to worship Heaven's God; and oh! as their voices are borne on the night-wind, let the silent prayer of every Christian who hears them ascend to a throne of grace for mercy on their behalf. They are more especially objects of pity, because they have the light of the Gospel in their land; but how is that light obscured! prejudice, and (shall I write it?) the conduct of many Europeans dwelling among them, and calling themselves Christians, have blinded their eyes, and because of the sins of others, the true Christian spends his strength in vain. Far be it from me to cast a sweeping censure, but our respectable and respected friends here will join me as I raise my voice against those nominal Christians, who, by their profligacy, prove ever "rocks a-head" to the already prejudiced Muslim. This always important city may now

be ranked among "men's thoroughfares" in a wide sense, and we must only hope that the day may come when the phrase, "these are Christians," will no longer convey reproach.

The Mohammedan months are lunar, and consequently retrograde; and when Ramadán occurs in the summer, the obligation to abstain from water during the long sultry days is fearful in its consequences. At sunset, the fasting Muslim takes his breakfast; and this meal generally commences with light refreshment, such as sweet cakes, raisins, &c.; for, from long abstinence, many persons find themselves in so weak a state, that they cannot venture to eat immediately a full meal. Many break their fast with merely a glass of sherbet, or a cup of coffee. This refreshment is succeeded by a substantial meal, equal to their usual dinner. They often retire to obtain a short sleep. Usually, two hours after sunset, criers greet all the persons in their respective districts, beating a small drum at the doors, and saying something complimentary to the inmates of each house. Again, the morning call to prayer is chanted much earlier than usual, perhaps an hour and a half before daybreak, to remind all to take their second meal; and the crier also goes another round, making a loud noise, in which he perseveres until he is answered, at each house where his attention is required. Thus, you see, no small pains are

taken to remind the faster to avail himself of his opportunities ; and it is singular to hear the variety of noises which disturb the nights of this most unpleasant month. At daybreak, each morning, the last signal is made from the citadel, by the firing of a cannon, for the removal of all food ; and on some occasions, this report seems to shake the city to the very foundations. The open lattice windows oblige us to hear all the noises I have described. Our windows are furnished with glazed frames, in addition to the carved wooden lattice-work, but the former are only closed in the winter, for those who desire to enjoy any sleep during the hot season must keep all windows (and if possible doors also) open. Judging by my own surprise at the degree of heat we have endured since our arrival, I imagine you have no adequate idea of it. On my opening, a few days since, a card-box full of sealing-wax, I found the whole converted into an oblong mass, fitting the lower part of the box.

As to the vermin of Egypt, I really think that the *flies* occasion the greatest annoyance, so abundant are they, and so distressing. Nets placed at the doors and windows exclude them ; but there are days, indeed weeks and months, in Egypt, when the temperature is so oppressive, that it is not possible to allow the air to be impeded, even by a net. Mosquitoes too are very troublesome in the morn-

ings and evenings, and much reduce the comfort of early rising. This is a serious inconvenience here, for we find the most agreeable hours are in the early mornings and in the cool evenings, after sunset. The old houses abound with bugs, but in this respect we have been particularly fortunate ; for we have not been annoyed by these very disgusting insects. Fleas are very troublesome during their season, I am told, but with us their season has not yet begun ; and I think and hope cleanliness in our house will, in a great degree, prevent their attentions. "There are insects" (as I once heard a lecturer on natural history express himself) "which must be nameless in all polite society ;" therefore, my dear friend, they must be nameless here, but of these we have seen five. These arrived at five different times in parcels of *new* linen from a bazaar, and their arrival has occasioned the closest scrutiny when any thing new is brought to us.

Rats, also, are extremely annoying, and nothing escapes their depredations, unless secured in wire safes, or hung up at a sufficient distance from the walls. These animals run about our bedrooms during the nights ; and I sometimes think they come in at the open windows. They are generally harmless, but sufficiently tiresome. Lizards too are very common, but perfectly innocuous, and occupy themselves entirely on the ceilings and windows in chasing flies, on which they seem to

subsist. I told you I feared much from the antiquated cobwebs that spiders would be numerous. They are so, truly, and so very large that I will not risk giving my opinion of their size; it is so far beyond any European specimen I have seen. But the gravest annoyances are scorpions, and of these we have found three, one of which was exactly three inches in length. I was much distressed on finding these, but comforted on hearing that if the wound they inflict be immediately scarified, and an application of sal ammoniac be made, it does not prove fatal. These applications, however, though absolutely necessary, are very painful; and I trust we may be spared the necessity of resorting to such means. Fearing for my children, for their sakes I am a coward, and I feel it is ever necessary to bear in mind that we cannot wander where we can be outcasts from the care of Heaven, or strangers to the protecting Providence of God.

I have suffered this letter to remain unfinished for a whole week, expecting daily that I might be able to tell you of the end of this year's inundation. This I am now able to do; but must first mention, that we have experienced a most extraordinary storm of wind, accompanied by such clouds of dust, that we were obliged to close our eyes and wait patiently until its fury had in some measure passed away. When it abated we looked out upon the city, and could only see the tops of its menarets

above the sea of dust, and its lofty palm-trees bending before the blast. I have *heard* such a hurricane, during the night, once since our arrival in Cairo, and fearful indeed it was, but I have never seen its effects until now. This was not one of the winds to which the Easterns give a name, such as the Zóba'ah, the Khamáseen winds, or the Samoom ; but a strong sweeping wind from the north-east. In looking down upon the many ruins of Cairo, I feel astonished by the fact of their withstanding such a hurricane. A storm like this is generally preceded and followed by a perfect calm.

This day (the 25th of October) is the first of the decrease of the Nile. It is usually at its greatest height, as I have already mentioned, at the end of September. It is not extraordinary that it should be a high inundation ; that is well accounted for this year, as it has been in the two preceding years, by the construction of many new embankments, but it is the lateness of the inundation which is so exceedingly unusual. It rose considerably on the 23rd instant, and on the 24th slightly ; and I find no one with whom we are acquainted here among the residents who remembers such an occurrence.

“ A very grievous murrain,” forcibly reminding us of that which visited this same country in the days of Moses, has prevailed during the last three months, and the already distressed peasants feel the calamity severely, or rather (I should say) the few

who possess cattle. Among the rich men of the country, the loss has been enormous. During our voyage up the Nile, we observed several dead cows and buffaloes lying in the river, as I mentioned in a former letter; and some friends who followed us two months after, saw many on the banks; indeed, up to this time, great numbers of cattle are dying in every part of the country, and the prevailing excitement leads me to recur to the subject.

LETTER VIII.

November 26th.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

I HAVE just returned from witnessing the curious procession of the Malimal, preparatory to the departure of the great caravan of pilgrims to Mekkah. We were early on the way, and after riding for nearly an hour we found ourselves in the main street of the city, opposite to the Khán el-Khaleelee, the chief Turkish bazaar of Cairo. I felt more than ever convinced that donkeys were the only safe means of conveyance in the streets of this city. A lady never rides but on a donkey, with a small carpet laid over the saddle. For gentlemen, horses are now more used than donkeys; but their riders encounter much inconvenience. In many cases, this morning, our donkeys threaded their way among loaded camels, where horses were turned back; and my apprehensions lest the large bales of goods should really sweep my boys from their saddles, were scarcely removed by the extreme care of their attendants, who always kept one arm round each of my children, in passing through the dangerous thoroughfares. I assure

you it is an exceedingly awkward thing to ride through the streets of Cairo at any time, but especially so during a season of festivity.

We had engaged for the day a room on a first floor, commanding a good view of the street, and we had not been long seated before an extraordinary uproar commenced. This arose from crowds of boys, provided with sticks, and absolutely privileged (as is usual on the days of this procession) to beat all Christians and Jews. A poor Frank gentleman was attacked under the window we were occupying, and protected with difficulty by some Arabs, who interposed with much kindness. It was especially matter of congratulation to-day, that our party were supposed to be Easterns, and that we had so learnt to *carry* the dress that we were not suspected. On one occasion, not long since, my donkey stumbled, and a Turkish gentleman, who was passing me, exclaimed, "Yá Sâtir" (O! Protector). Had he supposed I was an Englishwoman, I imagine he would not have invoked protection for me. The prejudice against Europeans is especially strong, as they are said to have enlightened the Pasha too much on matters of finance; but to-day I will dismiss this subject, and tell you of the procession, while it is fresh in my recollection.

The first persons who passed, belonging to the procession, were two men with drawn swords, who

engaged occasionally in mock combat. Next came a grotesque person, well mounted, and wearing a high pointed cap, and an immense beard of twisted hemp, and clothed in sheep-skins. He held a slender stick in his right hand, and in his left a bundle of papers, on which he pretended, with a tragicomical expression of countenance, to write judicial opinions. Next followed *the gun* of the caravan, a small brass field-piece, an hour and a half before noon, preceded by a company of Nizám troops, and followed by another company, headed by their band; the musical instruments being European. I cannot praise their performance, yet it approached nearer to music than any attempt I have heard in Egypt. It remains, however, for me to hear the professional singers of this country; and I am told by persons of undoubted taste, that if I do not admire the airs they sing, I shall be surprised at their skill and the quality of their voices.

The soldiers were followed by a long procession of Darweeshes. First came the Saaleeyeh, with numerous flags, bearing, in many cases, the names of God, Mohammad, and the founder of their order, on a ground of green silk. Most of these Darweeshes were beating a small kettle-drum called *báz*, which is held in the left hand, and beaten with a short thick strap. Some were beating cymbals, and all repeating religious ejaculations, chiefly names and epithets of God. They

were perpetually bowing their heads to the right and to the left during the whole repetition, and this motion was rendered the more apparent by many of them wearing very high felt caps; then, the variety in their costume, and, more than all, the gravity of their deportment, combined to rivet our attention. These Darweeshes were followed by a body of their parent order (the Refá-ceedeh), bearing black flags, and also beating bázes and cymbals, and repeating the like ejaculations. Their sheykh, a venerable-looking person, wearing a very large black turban, rode behind them, on horseback. Then passed the Kádirceedeh Darweeshes: their principal insignia were borne by members of their order; viz. palm-sticks, for fishing-rods; and fishing-nets strained on hoops, and raised on long poles, with many small fish suspended round them. They carried white flags. Next followed the Ahmedceedeh, and Baráhimch Darweeshes, bearing red and green flags; and immediately after these came "the Mahmal."

The Mahmal is a mere emblem of royalty, and contains nothing; but two copies of the Kurán, in cases of gilt silver, are fastened to the exterior. It is an imitation of a covered litter, borne on the back of a camel; and it accompanies the caravan yearly, forming, if I may use the expression, the banner of the pilgrims. Many persons have

understood that it contains the Kisweh, or new covering for the temple of Mekkah; but they are mistaken. The origin of this ceremony, as related in the ‘*Modern Egyptians*,’ was as follows:—“Sheger-ed-Durr (commonly called Shegerel-ed-Durr), a beautiful Turkish female slave, who became the favourite wife of the Sultan Es-Sâleh Negm-ed-Deen, and on the death of his son (with whom terminated the dynasty of the house of Eiyoub) caused herself to be acknowledged as Queen of Egypt, performed the pilgrimage in a magnificent Hódag (or covered litter), borne by a camel; and for several successive years her empty litter was sent with the caravan merely for the sake of state. Hence, succeeding princes of Egypt sent with each year’s caravan of pilgrims a kind of Hódag (which received the name of Mahmal, or Mahmil) as an emblem of royalty, and the kings of other countries followed their example.”* The usual covering of the Mahmal has been black brocade; that I have seen this morning is red, and I understand that it is shabby in comparison with those of former years: indeed each year (my brother tells me) all that is connected with this procession becomes less remarkable, and less money is expended on it by the government. But to me, and to those of us who had not pre-

* *Modern Egyptians*, 3rd ed., part ii., p. 203.

viously seen it, it was extremely interesting. There were none of the great men habited in cloth of gold, who preceded it on former occasions; neither were the camels handsomely caparisoned.

The half-naked sheykh who has for so many years followed the Mahmal, incessantly rolling his head, for which feat he receives a gratuity from the government, rode on a fine horse immediately after it. If he be the same man (and I am informed he is the very same) who has year after year committed this absurdity, it is wonderful that his head has borne such unnatural and long-continued motion. There followed him a number of led camels and horses, and their decorations were extremely picturesque, but not costly. The camels were ornamented in various ways; one having small bells, strung on either side of a saddle ornamented with coloured cloth; others with palm-branches, ostrich feathers, and small flags fixed on similar saddles decorated with cowries. These were succeeded by a company of regular troops, followed by the Emeer-el-Hâgg (or chief of the pilgrims). Then passed the usual collection of the presents which are distributed during the pilgrimage; and then, a number of drummers mounted on camels, and beating enormous kettle-drums: after these, some more led camels, and a numerous group bearing mesh'als, the tops of which were covered with coloured kerchiefs. "The mesh'al

is a staff with a cylindrical frame of iron at the top filled with wood, or having two, three, four, or five of these receptacles for fire.”* These were for the purpose of lighting the caravan; as the journey is mostly performed during the cool hours of night. Another company of officers and soldiers followed these; and then the litter and baggage of the Emceer-el-Ilagg. His first supply of water passed next, borne by a number of camels, each laden with four skins; and these were succeeded by led camels closing the procession.

Had we gone merely with the view of seeing the spectators, we should have been amply rewarded. The shops and their benches were crowded with people of many countries; and the variety in their costume and manners formed an amusing study. The windows of the first and second floors were perfectly full of women, children, and slaves; and here and there a richly embroidered dress was seen through the lattice.

On one point all denominations of people seemed agreed; viz. in purchasing something for their children from almost all the venders of sweets, and many passed constantly on this occasion; therefore their poor children kept up a continual system of cramming during the whole procession; and here my eyes were opened to a new manner of account-

* *Modern Egyptians*, 3rd ed., part i., p. 254.

ing for the generally wretched appearance of the children of this country. Their parents put anything and everything that is eatable into their mouths, without the slightest regard to its being wholesome or otherwise. How then can they be strong or healthy?

LETTER IX.

November, 1842.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

I SHALL now endeavour to give you some account of Cairo and its environs, with the help of a series of historical notes, for which I am indebted to my brother, who has derived his information on these subjects chiefly from El-Makreezee's 'Historical and Topographical Account of Egypt and its Metropolis.' This work of El-Makreezee is chiefly a compilation from the writings of other Arab historians and geographers; and those parts of which my brother has availed himself contain observations of many authors of different ages.

The first city founded by the Arabs in Egypt was El-Fustât. It was the residence of the governors of that country for more than a century; but after the overthrow of the dynasty of the Uma-weeyeh (or race of Umceyeh), a new city called El-'Askar, adjoining El-Fustât, became the seat of government. Afterwards, another city, which

[illegible]

received the name of El-Katâé' (or El-Katáy?'), was built in the neighbourhood of El-'Askar; and the independent princes of the family of Tooloon resided there. After the extinction of this dynasty El-'Askar became again the seat of government, and continued so until the general of El-Mo'ezz obtained possession of Egypt, and founded El-Kâthireh, which is now called Masr, or (by Europeans) Cairo.

El-Fustât was built upon the spot where the army of the Arabs encamped for a short time, after their conquest of Egypt, in the 20th year of the Flight (or A.D. 641). It received this name, which signifies "the Tent," from its having been founded around the tent of the Arab general 'Amr Ibn El-'A's, or (according to some authors) merely because "Fustât" is a term applicable to any city. It was, however, more commonly known by the name of Masr, which name has been lately transferred to Cairo. The appellation of Masr El-'Ateckah (or Old Masr) is now given to the small town which at present occupies a part of the site of El-Fustât. This town has been improperly called by European travellers "Old Cairo;" as well might Egyptian Babylon be called old Fustât.

The site of El-Fustât at the period of the Arabian conquest was unoccupied by any buildings, excepting a Roman fortress, still existing, called

Kasr esh-Shema, on the north of the hill of Babylon; but in the neighbourhood were many churches and convents. The Nile, at that period, flowed close by the fortress above mentioned. El-Fustát is described as a very fine city, containing houses five or six stories high, constructed of brick. The primary cause of its decline was the great famine which happened in the reign of El-Mustansir, in the middle of the fifth century of the Flight, and which lasted seven years. About a century after this awful calamity, the greater part of the city was destroyed by fire, to prevent its falling a prey to an invading Christian army.* It was partly rebuilt, but never regained its former opulence.

El-'Askar was founded in the year of the Flight 133 (A.D. 750-1), long before the decline of El-Fustát, which continued to be the metropolis of Egypt, though the governors no longer resided there. El-'Askar was rather a suburb of El-Fustát than a distinct city. El-Katáë', or El-Katáyë, was founded in the year of the Flight 256 (A.D. 869-70). It lay immediately on the west of the hill which is now occupied by the citadel of Cairo; and was about a mile in extent, from north to south, and from east to west. In the year 292, when the dynasty of the race of Tooloon was sub-

* Under Amaury, King of Jerusalem, called by the Egyptians Merée.

verted, this town was plundered, and partly destroyed by fire; and it is said that the great famine in the reign of El-Mustansir destroyed all its inhabitants, leaving it to fall to ruin. Its site has become included within the suburbs of Cairo, and its great mosque, founded by Ibn Tooloon, yet remains.

The site of another town, which was called El-Maks, and which existed before the conquest of Egypt by the Arabs, is also now included within the suburban districts of Cairo. Medeenet El-Káhíreh (the city of El-Káhíreh or Cairo) originally occupied a space about three quarters of a mile square. It was founded in the year of the Flight 358 (A.D. 968-9). The first wall was pulled down in the year 480 (A.D. 1087-8), and a new one built, which included a small additional space on the north and south. This was pulled down in the year 572 (A.D. 1176-7), and the citadel and a third wall were built by Saláh-ed-Deen (the Saladin of European historians). The third wall extended, from the citadel, along the eastern and northern sides of the metropolis, partly encompassing El-Maks, on the western side of which it terminated, being left unfinished. It was the intention of its builder to have made it to surround Cairo and the citadel, and El-Fustát. The suburbs of Cairo have become much more extensive than the original city.

I must now give you a brief account of the changes which have taken place in the bed of the river in the neighbourhood of El-Fustát and Cairo, chiefly since the foundation of the latter of those cities, for I think them very remarkable.

We are informed by El-Makreezee that, at the period of the conquest of Egypt by the Arabs, Er-Ródah was the only island existing in the neighbourhood of the sites of the two cities above-mentioned. It was believed that the colossal figure called Abu-I-Hól (the great Sphinx near the Pyramids of El-Geezeh), and a similar colossus on the opposite side of the Nile, were talismans contrived by the ancient Egyptians, to prevent the sands of the adjacent deserts from encroaching upon the banks of the river; but in spite of the popular opinion respecting their magic influence, the latter of these colossi was demolished in the year of the Flight 711 (A.D. 1311-12); and about the year 780 (A.D. 1378-9), the face of Abu-I-Hól was mutilated by the fanatic Sheykh Mohammad, surnamed Sáim-ed-Dahr. Immediately after these periods, it is affirmed, the sands of the eastern and western deserts began to overspread the cultivable land intervening between them and the Nile, and to cause a considerable contraction of the bed of the river; in truth, however, the eastern limits of the river in the neighbourhood of Cairo had become very much contracted in the sixth and

seventh centuries of the Flight, and have experienced but little change since the commencement of the eighth century.

Before the contraction of its bed, the river flowed by the walls of the Kasr-esh-Shema, and the mosque of 'Amr; to the northward of El-Fustât, its eastern limits were bounded by the town of El-'Askar, the gardens of Ez-Zahree, the eastern part of the quarter called El-Look, the town of El-Maks, the tract called Ard-et-Tabbâleh, the garden of El-Baal, and the village of Minyet-es-Secreg. Thus we see that the Nile formerly flowed close by the western suburbs and gardens of Cairo. Towards the close of the period of the dynasty of the Fawâtim (the Khaleefehs of Egypt), a large vessel, called El-Feel (or the Elephant), was wrecked in the Nile, near El-Maks, and, remaining where it sank, occasioned an accumulation of sand and mud, which soon became an extensive and fertile island. This new island, from the circumstance which gave rise to it, received the name of Gezeeret el-Feel (or the Island of the Elephant). It is laid down in the plan which shall accompany this letter, according to the description of its situation and extent, given by El-Makreezee.

In the year of the Flight 570 (A.D. 1174-5), this island became united with the main land on the east; and from that period the river gradually

retired from the neighbourhood of El-Maks ; forming, by the deposit of soil during the successive seasons of the inundation, the wide plain upon which the town of Boolák is situated. Boolák was founded in the year of the Flight 713 (A.D. 1313-14) ; and the island which is named after it (Gezeeret Boolák) was formed about the same period.

Boolák is about a mile in length, and half a mile is the measure of its greatest breadth. It contains about 20,000 inhabitants. Its houses, streets, and shops, &c., are like those of the metropolis, of which I hope to give you a description in my next letter. Of the mosques of Boolák, the large one called the Sináncceyh, and that of Abu-l-'Elä, are the most remarkable ; the first for its size, the latter for the beauty of its má'd'neh, or menaret. The principal manufactories are those of cotton and linen cloths, and of striped silks of the same kind as the Syrian and Indian. Many Franks find employment in them. A printing-office has also been established at Boolák by the present Vicéroy. Many works on military and naval tactics, and others on Arabic grammar, poetry, letter-writing, geometry, astronomy, surgery, &c., have issued from this press. The printing-office contains several *lithographic* presses, which are used for printing proclamations, tables illustrative of military and naval tactics, &c.

The city which is known to Europeans by the name of Cairo, or Grand Cairo, is called by the Egyptians Masr;* and in letters and other writings, the epithet El-Mahrooseh† (or The Guarded) is generally added. El-Káhir (or the planet Mars), an unpropitious star, being the ascendant at the period of its foundation, it was originally called El-Káhireh,‡ whence the Italianized name Cairo. It was founded at night. Astrologers had been consulted and had fixed on a propitious moment for laying the foundations of the city-wall. They were to have given a signal at that precise moment by ringing a number of bells, which were suspended to cords supported by poles, along the whole circumference of the intended wall; but a raven happening to alight upon one of the cords, the bells were put in motion before the chosen time; and the builders, who were waiting for the signal, immediately commenced their work—thus the city was founded at an inauspicious instead of a fortunate moment.§

* The Turks, and many other oriental foreigners, pronounce it Misr, and thus it is pronounced in the literary dialect of Arabic.

† In government documents, this epithet is often used alone to designate the Egyptian metropolis.

‡ El-Káhir and El-Káhireh (masc. and fem.) signify victorious.

§ El-Makreezee's account of the first wall.

From the landing-place at Boolák to the *nearest* gates of the metropolis, the distance is a little more than one mile. The southern road leads to the Esbekeyeh and the Frank quarters, and the northern road leads (but not in a straight course) to the gate called Báb El-Hadeed, at the north-west angle of the city. At a short distance from this gate, it passed by a high mound of rubbish, upon which was a round tower, with a telegraph. This tower commanded a magnificent view of the metropolis, the citadel, and Mount Mukattam.

The area which the metropolis occupies is about three square miles. Its extreme length is three miles, and its extreme breadth one and a half. The population is about 240,000. Some travellers (judging by the narrowness of its streets, and from the crowds that are met in the great thoroughfares), have represented Cairo as a close, overpeopled city; and have attributed to this supposed closeness the origin and spread of those epidemic diseases with which it has been visited: but the case is far otherwise; it is a less close or crowded city than London or Paris, or perhaps any European metropolis. For a population of 248,000 inhabitants, the space of three square miles is certainly very ample. The streets are made narrow for the sake of shade, but most of the houses are large enough for twice as many

inmates as they contain, and are very airy, the windows being of open lattice work.

The walls by which nearly the whole of Cairo is surrounded are composed of the calcareous stone of the neighbouring mountains, and partly of the materials of some pyramidal tombs which were near the principal pyramids of El-Geezeh; but they are not of uniform strength, nor the work of one period. The metropolis is bounded on the eastern side, partly by a portion of the third wall (which was built by Salâh-ed-Deen), uniting with the walls of the citadel, and partly by modern walls of rude construction. The northern wall is well-built and lofty. The walls on the western and southern sides are irregular in their direction, low, and for the most part very ill constructed, more like the walls of a garden than those of a great city. High mounds of rubbish rise on the northern, eastern, and southern sides of the metropolis; the French erected many forts upon these mounds, which completely commanded the town, but they are now in a state of ruin. There were similar mounds on the western side; but these have been lately removed, and their site has been planted with olive trees, acacias, &c. The citadel overawes the town, but is itself commanded by the neighbouring mountain.

Three of the gates of Cairo are very fine struc-

tures. They were built with the second wall of the city, in the year of the Flight 480 (A.D. 1087-8), during the reign of El-Mustansir, and are almost the only monuments of the times of the Khaleefehs now remaining in Egypt. Two of these, called Báb en-Nasr (or the Gate of Victory), and Báb el-Futooh (or the Gate of Conquests), are in the north wall, and between six and seven hundred feet apart. They are each about seventy feet high, and eighty feet or more in width. The former has two square towers, the latter two round fronted towers, and this gate is particularly handsome, but it cannot be viewed to advantage, as there are houses almost close before it. The third of the gates alluded to is that called Báb Zuweyleh.* Though in the very heart of the metropolis, it marks the southern limit of the original city. It has two massive round-fronted towers, from each of which rises a lofty and elegant mād'neh, presenting a grand and picturesque effect. The mād'nehs belong to the great mosque of El-Mu-eiyad, which is immediately within the gate, on the left of a person entering. They were built with the mosque, in the year of the Flight 819 (A.D. 1416-17). Before this gate criminals are generally executed. Among the other gates, that called Báb el-Adawee,

* Originally called Zawceleh. This was the name of an Arab tribe.

in the centre of the north wall, may be mentioned as one of solid construction, but not otherwise remarkable; also the Báb el-Hadeed, which was built with the third wall.

In my next letter I must describe the interior of the metropolis.

LETTER X.

November, 1842.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

I HAVE already attempted to describe to you my impressions on my first entry into Cairo. My ideas of it, for a considerable time, were very confused ; it seemed to me, for the most part, a labyrinth of ruined and half-ruined houses, of the most singular construction ; and in appearance so old, that I was surprised at being informed that, only a few years ago, it presented a far less unhappy aspect.

Cairo is dignified with the name of Umm-ed-Dunya (the Mother of the World) and other sounding appellations. Though it has much declined since the discovery of the passage to India by the Cape of Good Hope, and more especially of late years, it is still one of the most considerable cities in the East. It is altogether an Arabian city ; and the very finest specimens of Arabian architecture are found within its walls. The private houses are in general moderately large ; the lower part of stone, and the superstructure of brick ; but some are little better than huts.

The streets are unpaved, and very narrow, generally from five to ten feet wide. Some are even less than *four* feet in width; but there are others as much as forty or fifty feet wide, though not for any great length. I must describe the streets under their different appellations.

A *shûrê'*, or great thoroughfare-street, is generally somewhat irregular both in its direction and width. In most parts the width is scarcely more than sufficient for two loaded camels to proceed at a time; and hence much inconvenience is often occasioned to the passenger, though carriages are very rarely encountered. All burdens are borne by camels, if too heavy for asses; and vast numbers of the former, as well as many of the latter, are employed in supplying the inhabitants of Cairo with the water of the Nile, which is conveyed in skins, the camel carrying a pair of skin bags, and the ass a goat-skin, tied round at the neck. The great thoroughfare-streets being often half obstructed by these animals, and generally crowded with passengers, some on foot, and others riding, present striking scenes of bustle and confusion, particularly when two long trains of camels happen to meet each other where there is barely room enough for them to pass, which is often the case. Asses are in very general use, and most convenient for riding through such streets as those of Cairo, and are always to be procured for hire. They

are preferred to horses even by some men of the wealthier classes of the Egyptians. Their paces are quick and easy ; and the kind of saddle with which they are furnished is a very comfortable seat : it is a broad, party-coloured pack-saddle. A servant generally runs with the donkey ; and exerts himself, by almost incessant bawling, to clear the way for his master. The horseman proceeds with less comfort, and less speed,—seldom beyond the rate of a slow walk ; and though preceded by a servant, and sometimes by two servants to clear his way, he is often obliged to turn back : it is, therefore, not often that a numerous cavalcade is seen in the more frequented streets ; and there are some streets so contracted that a person on horseback cannot pass through them. It is not uncommon for individuals of the higher and middle classes in Cairo to exchange salutations in the streets, though unacquainted with each other. Thus the Muslim salutation was often given to my brother, a fact which I mention merely to show the fallacy of the opinion that the natives of the East can easily detect, even by a glance, a European in Oriental disguise.

A stranger, with lofty ideas of Eastern magnificence, must be surprised at the number of meanly-dressed persons whom he meets in the streets of Cairo. Blue is the prevailing colour ; as the principal article of dress, both of the men and

women of the lower orders, is a full shirt of cotton or linen, dyed with indigo, which is the production of the country. The blue shirts of the men, particularly of the servants, often conceal vests of silk and cloth. Some persons are so poor as not even to possess a ragged turban; their only head-dress being a close-fitting cap of white, or brown felt, or an old turboosh;* and many are without shoes. Christians and Jews are distinguished by a black, or blue, or light-brown turban. The costumes of the women, and especially of the ladies, are the most remarkable in the eyes of the European stranger. The elegant dress which they wear at home is concealed whenever they appear in public by a very full silk gown (called *tób*), and a large black silk covering (called *habarah*) enveloping almost the whole person; or, instead of the latter, in the case of unmarried ladies, a *white* silk covering: the face veil (*burko*') is of white muslin; it is narrow, and reaches from the eyes nearly to the feet. Thus encumbered, it is with some difficulty that the ladies shuffle along in their slippers; but they are seldom seen in the crowded streets on foot: well-trained donkeys are hired for their convenience, and are furnished, for this purpose, with a high and broad saddle, covered with a carpet, upon which the lady sits astride, attended by a

* The red cloth skull-cap, round which the turban is wound.

servant on each side. A long train of ladies, and female slaves attired in the same manner, one behind another, a whole hareem, is often seen thus mounted; and passengers of all ranks make way for them with the utmost respect. The women of the inferior classes wear a black face veil, which I think much more becoming than the white. It is sometimes adorned with gold coins and beads; or they draw a part of the head veil before the face, leaving only one eye visible.

Numbers of blind persons are seen in the streets of Cairo; and many more with a bandage over one eye; but I seldom see a *woman* with diseased eyes.

Shops, which (I have before remarked) are merely small recesses, and most of which are poorly stocked, generally occupy the front part of the ground-floor of each house in a great street; and the houses, with few exceptions, are two or three stories high. Their fronts, above the ground-floor, projecting about two feet, and the windows of wooden lattice-work projecting still further, render the streets gloomy, but shady and cool. On either side of the great streets are by-streets and quarters.

A *darb*, or by-street, differs from a *shâre'* in being narrower, and not so long. In most cases, the *darb* is about six or eight feet wide, is a thoroughfare, and has, at each end, a gateway, with a



Shop.

large wooden door, which is always closed at night. Some darbs consist only of private houses ; others contain shops.

A hárah, or quarter, is a particular district consisting of one or more streets or lanes. In general, a small quarter contains only private houses, and has but one entrance, with a wooden gate, which, like that of a darb, is closed at night.

The sooks, or markets, are short streets, or short portions of streets, having shops on either side. In some of them, all the shops are occupied by persons of the same trade. Many sooks are covered overhead by matting, extended upon rafters, resembling those I observed at Alexandria, and some have a roof of wood. Most of the great thoroughfare-streets, and many by-streets, consist wholly, or for the most part, of a succession of sooks.

Many of the kháns of Cairo are similar to the sooks just described ; but in general, a khán consists of shops or magazines surrounding a square or oblong court.

Khán El-Khaleelee, which is situated in the centre of that part which constituted the original city, a little to the east of the main street, and occupies the site of the cemetery of the Fawátim (the Khaleefehs * of Egypt), particularly deserves to be mentioned, being one of the chief marts of

* The bones of the Khaleefehs were thrown on the mounds of rubbish outside the city.

Cairo. It consists of a series of short lanes, with several turnings, and has four entrances from different quarters. The shops in this khán are mostly occupied by Turks, who deal in ready-made clothes and other articles of dress, together with arms of various kinds, the small prayer-carpet used by the Muslims, and other commodities. Public auctions are held there (as in many other markets in Cairo) twice in the week, on Monday and Thursday, on which occasions the khán is so crowded, that, in some parts, it is difficult for a passenger to push his way through. The sale begins early in the morning, and lasts till the noon-prayers. Clothes (old as well as new), shawls, arms, pipes, and a variety of other goods, are offered for sale in this manner by brokers, who carry them up and down the market. Several water-carriers, each with a goat-skin of water on his back, and a brass cup for the use of any one who would drink, attend on these occasions. Sherbet of raisins, and bread (in round, flat cakes), with other eatables, are also cried up and down the market; and on every auction day, several real or pretended idiots, with a distressing number of other beggars, frequent the khán.

Another of the principal kháns of Cairo is that called the Kamzáwee, which is the principal market of the drapers and silk-mercers.

There the few other kháns in Cairo, or rather

few other buildings so designated; but there are numerous buildings called wekálehs, which are of the same description as most of the kháns, a wekáleh generally consisting of magazines surrounding a square court.

The Wekálet el-Gellábeh (or Wekáleh of the slave-merchants), which is near the Khán El-Khalelee, has lately ceased to be the market for black slaves. It surrounds a spacious square court, in which were generally seen several groups of male and female slaves, besmeared with grease (of which they are very fond), and nearly in a state of nudity, excepting in winter, when they were better clad, and kept within doors. As there is a thoroughfare through this wekáleh, the slaves were much exposed to public view. The market for black slaves is now at Káid Bey, which is a city of the dead, comprising a few old habitations for the living, between the metropolis and the neighbouring mountain. The slave-merchants were obliged to transfer their unfortunate captives to this cemetery in the desert in consequence of its having been represented to the government that epidemic diseases originated in the slave-market in Cairo. I have not visited them, nor do I intend to do so; for although slavery in the East is seen under the most favourable circumstances, there is something in it so revolting, that I am not disposed to try my feelings when I can do no good. But I am told

that they appear careless and happy ; for their greatest troubles are past, and they know that the slave of the Muslim fares even better than the free servant. Some of the more valuable of the female slaves (as the *white* female slaves, to whom another *wekáleh* is appropriated) are only shown to those persons who express a desire to become purchasers.

Having now described the streets and markets of Cairo, I may mention some particular quarters, &c. There are some parts which are inhabited exclusively by persons of the same religion or nation. Many quarters are inhabited only by Muslims.*

The quarter of the Jews (*Hárat el-Yahood*) is situated in the western half of that portion of the metropolis which composed the original city. It is very extensive, but close and dirty. Some of its streets, or rather lanes, are so narrow, that two persons can barely pass each other in them ; and in some parts, the soil has risen by the accumulation of rubbish a foot or more above the thresholds of the doors.

The Greeks have two quarters, and the Copts have several, of which some are very extensive. The Franks inhabit not only what is called the quarter of the Franks (*Hárat el-Ifreng*), but are interspersed throughout a considerable district, situated between the canal (which runs through the

* About three-fourths of the population of Cairo are native Muslims.

city) and the Ezbekeeyeh, of which latter I shall presently give you a description.

The motley population of the part of the metropolis where most of the Franks reside, gives it the appearance of a quarter in a sea-port town, like Alexandria. Some of the Franks retain their national costume; others adopt partly or wholly the Turkish dress. The chief thoroughfare-street in this part of the town is the market, called the Mooskee, where are a few shops fitted up in the European style, with glass fronts, and occupied by Franks, who deal in various European commodities. The Hârat el-Ifreng is a short street leading out of the Mooskee, on the southern side.

There are several vacant spaces of considerable extent in the interior of the metropolis, some of which, during the season of the inundation (the autumn), become lakes. The principal of these I must here mention.

The great place which bears the name of the Ezbekeeyeh is an irregular tract, the greatest length of which is nearly half a mile, and the greatest breadth about a third of a mile. It is a very favourite resort of mine, as my children are there secure from the many dangers which I fancy surround them in the crowded streets.

On the south are two modern Turkish palaces, with gardens. On the west is a plain wall (part of the wall of the metropolis), and another Turkish

palace, occupying the site of the mansion of the famous Memlook Bey El-Elfee, which became the residence of Napoleon, and of Kleber, who was assassinated in the adjacent garden. On the north side is a Christian quarter, presenting a long row of lofty but neglected houses. During the season of the inundation, the Nile enters this extensive tract by a canal, and the place is partially inundated; the water remains three or four months, after which the ground is sown. It was formerly, during the season of the inundation, one extensive lake, but is now converted into something like a garden, with an agreeable mixture of trees and water. I am told that the place has a much more pleasing appearance when entirely clothed with green, than it had when it was a lake; and so I should imagine, for the water is very turbid.

The Birket el-Feel (or Lake of the Elephant) also receives the water of the Nile, during the season of the inundation. Only a small part of it is open to the public.

There are two small lakes in the western part of the metropolis, and several others in its vicinity. There are also several cemeteries in the eastern part of the town,* and many large gardens. These gardens are chiefly stocked with palm-trees, acacias, sycamores, oranges, limes, pomegranates, &c. Little

* The principal cemeteries are without the town.

arrangement is displayed in them. They have generally one or more *sákiyehs*, which raise the water for their irrigation from wells.

The canal* (*El-Khaleeg*) which traverses the metropolis is no ornament to it. In most parts of its course through the town, it is closely hemmed in on each side by the backs of houses; therefore it cannot be seen, excepting in a few places, by the passengers in the streets. Most of the bridges over it are moreover lined with shops on both sides, so that a person passing over cannot see that he is crossing the canal. The water of the Nile is admitted into the canal in August, and the entrance is closed by a dam of earth not long after the river has begun to subside; consequently, after three or four months, only stagnant puddles remain in it. While it continues open, boats enter it from the Nile, and pass through the whole length of the metropolis.

Of the public buildings of Cairo, the most interesting certainly are the mosques, the more remarkable of which I have described to you. They are extremely picturesque, and exquisite taste is displayed in the variety and elegance of their *mád'neh*s or menarets: but the beauty of these and other parts is, in my opinion, much injured by the prevalent fashion of daubing the alternate courses

* This canal is the ancient *Ammis Trajanus*.

of stone with whitewash and dark-red ochre. The central part of a great mosque is, in general, a square court, which is surrounded by porticoes, the columns of which are, in few cases, uniform; for they are mostly the spoils of ancient temples, as are also the rich marble slabs, &c., which have been employed to decorate the pavements and the lower portions of the inner faces of the walls in many of the mosques.

The domes are beautiful in form, and, in some instances, in their decorations. The pulpits, also, deserve to be mentioned for their elegant forms, and their curious intricate panel-work. The pulpit is placed with its back against the wall in which is the niche; is surmounted by a small cupola, and has a flight of steps leading directly (never tortuously nor sideways) up to the little platform which is the station of the preacher. The congregation range themselves in parallel rows upon the matted or carpeted pavement, all facing that side of the mosque in which is the niche. These few general remarks will enable you better to understand the accounts of particular mosques, or to supply some deficiencies in my descriptions.

Many of these buildings are doubtless monuments of sincere piety; but not a few have certainly originated in ways far from creditable to their founders. I passed by one, a handsome building, respecting which I was told the following

anecdote. The founder, on the first occasion of opening his mosque for the ceremonials of the Friday prayers, invited the chief 'Ulama to attend the service, and each of these congratulated him before the congregation, by reciting some tradition of the Prophet, or by some other words of an apposite nature, excepting one. This man the founder addressed, asking wherefore he was silent. "Hast thou nothing to say," he asked, "befitting this occasion?" The man thus invited readily answered, "Yes. If thou hast built this mosque with money lawfully acquired, and with a good intention, know that God hath built for thee a mansion in Paradise, and great will be thy felicity. But if thou raised this temple by means of wealth unlawfully obtained, by money exacted from the poor by oppression and tyranny, know that there is prepared for thee a place in hell, and evil will be the transit thither." The latter was the case; and within a few hours after he had thus spoken, the only one among the company of 'Ulama who had dared to utter the language of truth on this occasion—to do which, indeed, required no little courage—suddenly died, a victim, as was well known, of poison.

LETTER XI.

Cairo, November, 1842.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

BEING extremely anxious to see the interiors of the principal mosques, I was much vexed at finding that it had become very difficult for a Christian to obtain access to them. My brother might, perhaps, have taken us without risk, as he is generally mistaken for a Turk ; but had he done so, we might have been spoken to in some mosque in the Turkish language, in which language we could not have replied ; whereas, if we were conducted by a Cairene, no Turkish ladies were likely to address us, and if any Arab ladies should do so, our Arabic would only induce them to imagine us to be Turks. At length an old friend of my brother offered to take me if I would consent to ride after him in the streets and follow him in the mosque and appear to be, for the time being, the chief lady of his harem.

It appeared to me that I should commit a breach in etiquette, by consenting thus to displace his wife (for he has *but one*) ; but finding he would not consent to take me on any other terms, and being be-

on gratifying my curiosity, I agreed to submit to his arrangement, and the more readily because his wife expressed, with much politeness, the pleasure she anticipated in contributing to my gratification. I had never seen my kind old conductor but once, and then through the hareem blinds, until the morning arrived for our expedition, when I and my sister-in-law mounted our donkeys, and submitted ourselves to his guidance. He rode first in the procession; I next; then followed my sister-in-law; and lastly, his wife. We endeavoured on several occasions to induce her to take a more distinguished place, but in vain, and therefore came to the conclusion that she must be infinitely better acquainted with Eastern manners than ourselves, and that it would be safer and better not to oppose her. I use the expression safer, because I was fully aware that if we appeared in any respect *un-*eastern, or rather if we did not *look* like Muslims, we should incur the risk of being turned out of any mosque we might enter, and loaded with reproach and insult.

With (I confess) nervous feelings, we stopped at one of the entrances of the mosque of the Hasaneyn, which is generally esteemed the most sacred in Cairo. It was crowded with ladies who were paying their weekly visit to the tomb of El-Hoseyn

I felt that I had rather have been initiated be-

fore entering the *most sacred* mosque, and thought I had been too bold. Never did a submissive wife walk more meekly after her husband than I followed the steps of my governor *pro tempore*. I gained, however, some confidence by remarking the authoritative air he assumed as soon as he had passed the threshold of the mosque; indeed he played his part admirably.

At the threshold all persons remove their shoes, or slippers, the ladies walking, in the mosque, in the yellow morocco socks, or boots, which I have before described to you; and here I must remark on the scrupulous attention which is paid to cleanliness; for the pale yellow morocco is scarcely injured by a whole day spent in perambulating these Muslim sanctuaries. The men generally carry the shoes in the left hand through the mosque, placed sole to sole, and some ladies carry theirs, but we, like many others, preferred leaving them with our servants, for the walking-dress in itself is so exceedingly cumbrous, and requires so much management, that two hands are scarcely sufficient to preserve its proper arrangement.

The mosque of the Hasaneyn,* which is situated to the north of the Azhar, and not far distant, was founded in the year of the Flight 549 (A.D. 1154-5); but has been more than once rebuilt.

* By the Hasaneyn are meant Hasán and Hoseyn, the grandsons of the Prophet.

The present building was erected about 70 years ago. The fore part consists of a handsome hall, or portico, the roof of which is supported by numerous marble columns, and the pavement covered with carpets. Passing through this hall, I found myself in that holy place under which the head of the martyr El-Hoseyn is said to be buried deep below the pavement. It is a lofty square saloon, surmounted by a dome. Over the spot where the sacred relic is buried, is an oblong monument, covered with green silk, with a worked inscription around it. This is enclosed within a high screen of bronze, of open work; around the upper part of which are suspended several specimens of curious and elegant writing. The whole scene was most imposing. The pavements are exquisite; some of virgin-marble, pure and bright with cleanliness, some delicately inlaid: and the whole appearance is so striking, that I am persuaded if a stranger were to visit the shrine of El-Hoseyn *alone*, he would never believe that El-Islam is on the wane.

All the visitors whom I saw passed round the tomb, walking from left to right, touching each corner of the screen with the right hand, and then applying that hand to their lips and forehead, reciting at the same time, but inaudibly, the Fát'hah (or opening chapter of the Kurán), a ceremony also observed on visiting *other* tombs. Many were

most devoutly praying, and one woman kissed the screen with a fervour of devotion which interested while it grieved me. For myself, however, I can never think of the shrine of El-Hoseyn without being deeply affected by reflecting upon the pathetic history of that amiable man, in whom were combined, in an eminent degree, so many of the highest Christian virtues.

We next bent our steps to El-Záme el-Azhar (or the splendid mosque*), which is situated, as I have said, to the south of the Hasaneyn, and not far distant, midway between the principal street of the city and the gate called Báb El-Ghureiyib. It is the principal mosque of Cairo, and the *University of the East*; and is also the first, with regard to the period of its foundation, of all the mosques of the *city*; but it has been so often repaired, and so much enlarged, that it is difficult to ascertain exactly how much of the *original* structure we see in the present state of the mosque. It was founded about nine months after the first wall of the city, in the year of the Flight 359 (A.D. 969-70). Though occupying a space about three hundred feet square, it makes but little show externally; for it is so surrounded by houses, that only its entrances and *mád'nehs* can be seen from the streets. It has two grand gates, and four

* Some travellers have strangely misinterpreted the name of this building, calling it the "mosque of flowers."

minor entrances. Each of the two former has two doors, and a school-room above, open at the front and back. Every one takes off his shoes before he passes the threshold of the gate, although if he enter the mosque by the principal gate, he has to cross a spacious court before he arrives at the place of prayer. This custom is observed in every mosque. The principal gate is in the centre of the front of the mosque: it is the nearest to the main street of the city. Immediately within this gate are two small mosques; one on either hand. Passing between these, we enter the great court of the Azhar, which is paved with stone, and surrounded by porticoes. The principal portico is that which is opposite this entrance; those on the other three sides of the court are divided into a number of *riwaks* or apartments for the accommodation of the numerous students who resort to this celebrated university from various and remote countries of Africa, Asia, and Europe, as well as from different parts of Egypt.

These persons, being mostly in indigent circumstances, are supported by the funds of the mosque; each receiving a certain quantity of bread and soup at noon, and in the evening. Many blind paupers are also supported here, and we were much affected by seeing some bent with age, slowly walking through the avenues of columns, knowing from habit every turn and every passage, and looking

like the patriarchs of the assembled multitude. The riwáks are separated from the court, and from each other, by partitions of wood, which unite the columns or pillars. Those on the side in which is the principal entrance are very small, there being only one row of columns on this side; but those on the right and left are spacious halls, containing several rows of columns. There are also some above the ground-floor. Each riwák is for the natives of a particular country, or of a particular province in Egypt; the Egyptian students being of course more numerous than those of any other nation.

In going the round of these apartments, after passing successively among natives of different divisions of Egypt, we find ourselves in the company of people of Mekkeh and El-Medeeneh; then in the midst of Syrians; in another minute among Muslims of central Africa; next amidst Maghár'beh (or natives of northern Africa, west of Egypt); then, with European and Asiatic Turks; and quitting these, we are introduced to Persians, and Muslims of India:

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mosque, make me proud of having enjoyed the privilege of walking leisurely through its extensive porticoes, and observing its heterogeneous students engaged in listening to the lectures of their professors.

To the left of the great court is a smaller one, containing the great tank at which the ablution preparatory to prayer is performed by all those who have not done it before entering the mosque. The great portico is closed by partitions of wood between a row of square pillars, or piers, behind the front row of columns. The partition of the central archway has a single door; and some of the other partitions have smaller doors. The great portico is very spacious: it contains eight rows of small marble columns ranged parallel with the front. That part beyond the fifth row of columns was added by the builder of one of the grand gates, about 70 years ago. The walls are whitewashed: the niche and pulpit are very plain; and simplicity is the prevailing character of the whole of the interior of the great portico. The pavement is covered with mats; and a few small carpets are seen here and there.

A person of rank or wealth is generally accompanied by a servant bearing a seggádeh (or small carpet, about the size of a hearth-rug), upon which he prays. During the noon-prayers of the Friday, the worshippers are very

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mosque, make me proud of having enjoyed the privilege of walking leisurely through its extensive porticoes, and observing its heterogeneous students engaged in listening to the lectures of their professors.

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numerous ; and, arranged in parallel rows, they sit upon the matting.

Different scenes at other times are presented in the great portico of the Azhar. We saw many lecturers addressing their circles of attentive listeners, or reading to them commentaries on the Kurán. In most cases these lecturers were leaning against a pillar, and I understand that in general each has his respective column, where his pupils regularly attend him, sitting in the form of a circle on the matted floor. Some persons take their meals in the Azhar, and many houseless paupers pass the night there, for this mosque is left open at all hours. Such customs are not altogether in accordance with the sanctity of the place ; but peculiarly illustrative of the simplicity of Eastern manners.

We next visited the fine mosque of Mohamad Bey, founded in the year of the Flight 1187 (A.D. 1773-4), adjacent to the Azhar. This is remarkable as a very noble structure, of the old style, erected at a late period.

The great mosque of that impious impostor the Khaleefeh *El-Hákím* (who professed to be a prophet, and afterwards to be God incarnate) derives an interest from the name it bears, and from its antiquity. It is situated immediately within that part of the northern wall of the city which connects the Báb en-Nasr and Báb el-Futooh. This

mosque was completed in the reign of El-Hákím, in the year of the Flight 403 (A.D. 1012-13) ; but was founded by his predecessor. It is now in a state of ruin, and no longer used as a place of worship. It occupies a space about 400 feet square, and consists of arcades surrounding a square court.

LETTER XII.

November, 1842.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

I WILL continue the subject I left incomplete in my last. Several of the finest mosques in Cairo front the main street of the city. In proceeding along this street from north to south, the first mosque that particularly attracts notice is the Barkookeeyeh, on the right side.

This is a collegiate mosque, and was founded in the year of the Flight 786 (A.D. 1384-5). It has a fine dome, and a lofty and elegant mi'dneh; and the interior is particularly handsome, though in a lamentable state of decay.

A little beyond this, on the same side of the street, are the tomb, mosque, and hospital of the Sultán Kalá-oon, composing one united building. The tomb and mosque form the front part; the former is to the right of the latter; and a passage, which is the general entrance, leads between them to the hospital (Máristán).* These three united buildings were founded in the year of the Flight

* Vulgarly pronounced Muristan.

683 (A.D. 1284-5). The tomb has a very large *má'd'neh*, and is a noble edifice; its front is coloured red and white, in squares: the interior is very magnificent. The mosque is not remarkable. The hospital contains two small oblong courts, surrounded by small cells, in which mad persons are confined and chained; men in one court, and women in the other. Though these wretched beings are provided for by the funds of the establishment, it is the custom to take them food, and they ask for it in a manner which is most affecting. But here I must make one consolatory remark: the poor creatures have certainly more than enough to eat, for none seemed hungry, and I observed that one of the men threw down a piece of bread which was given to him.

Judging by my own anxiety to ascertain the real state of the poor lunatics in the *Máristán*, I cannot describe to you their condition too minutely. Our ears were assailed by the most discordant yells as soon as we entered the passage leading to the cells. We were first conducted into the court appropriated to the men, one of our servants attending us with the provisions. It is surrounded by small cells, in which they are separately confined, and each cell has a small grated window, through which the poor prisoner's chain is fastened to the exterior. Here seemed exhibited every description of insanity. In many cells were those who suf-

ferred from melancholy madness ; in *one only* I saw a cheerful maniac, and he was amusing some visitors exceedingly by his jocose remarks. Almost all stretched out their arms as far as they could reach, asking for bread, and one poor soul especially interested me by the melancholy tone of his supplication. Their outstretched arms rendered it frequently dangerous to pass their cells, for there is a railing in the midst of the court, surrounding an oblong space, which I imagine has been a tank, but which is now filled with stones ; and this railing so confines the space appropriated to visitors, that one of our party was cautioned by the superintendent when she was not aware she was in arms' length of the lunatics.

I trust that the mildness and gentleness of manner we observed in the keepers were not assumed for the time, and I think they were not, for the lunatics did not appear to fear them. The raving maniacs were strongly chained, and wearing each a collar and hand-cuffs. One poor creature endeavoured, by constantly shaking his chain, to attract pity and attention. They look unlike human beings, and the manner of their confinement, and the barren wretchedness of their cells, contributed to render the scene more like a menagerie than anything else. It is true that this climate lessens the requirements of every grade in society, so that the poor generally sleep upon the bare ground, or upon

thin mats; but it is perfectly barbarous to keep these wretched maniacs without anything but the naked floor on which to rest themselves, weary, as they must be, by constant excitement.

I turned sick at heart from these abodes of wretchedness, and was led towards the court of the women. Little did I expect that scenes infinitely more sad awaited me. No *man* being permitted to enter the part of the building appropriated to the women, the person who had hitherto attended us gave the provision we had brought into the hand of the chief of the female keepers. The maniacs sit within the doors of open cells surrounding their court, and there is no appearance of their being confined. I shrunk as I passed the two first, expecting they would rush out; but being assured that they were chained, I proceeded to look into the cells, one by one. The first lunatic I remarked particularly, was an old and apparently blind woman, who was an object of peculiar interest, from the expression of settled sadness in her countenance. Nothing seemed to move her. A screaming raving maniac was confined in a cell nearly opposite to hers; but either from habit, or the contemplation of her own real and imagined sorrows, the confusion seemed by her perfectly unheeded. The cell next to hers presented to my view a young girl, about sixteen or seventeen years of age, in a perfect state of nudity; she sat in a crouching at-

titude, in statue-like stillness, and in the gloom of her prison she looked like stone. The next poor creature was also young, but older than the preceding, and she merely raised her jet-black eyes and looked at us through her dishevelled hair, not wildly, but calmly and vacantly. She, too, had no article of clothing. I was ill-prepared for the sight of such misery, and I hastily passed the poor squalid, emaciated, raving maniacs, all without any covering; and was leaving the court, when I heard a voice exclaiming, in a melancholy tone of supplication, "Stay, O my mistress, give me five paras for tobacco before you go." I turned, and the entreaty was repeated by a nice-looking old woman, who was very grateful when I assured her she should have what she required. She was clothed, and sitting almost behind the entrance of her cell, and seemed on the look-out for presents. The woman who was the superintendent gave her the trifle for me, and I hope she was permitted to spend it as she desired. She and the first I saw were the only two who were not perfect pictures of misery. If insanity, the most severe of human woes, calls for our tenderest sympathy, the condition of these wretched lunatics in Cairo cries aloud for our deepest commiseration. How their situation can be mended, I know not: the government alone can interfere, and the government does not.

We were informed that the establishment was

endowed with remarkable liberality. It is, and always has been, a hospital for the sick, as well as a place of confinement for the insane; and originally, for the entertainment of those patients who were troubled with restlessness, a band of musicians and a number of storytellers were in constant attendance.

The friend who conducted us related some anecdotes of the poor maniacs, to which I listened with interest. The first, I am told, has been related by some European traveller, in a work descriptive of the Egyptians; but as I do not know by whom, and you may not have read or heard it, I will give you that as well as the others.

A butcher, who had been confined some time in the Máristán, conceived an excessive hatred for a Delce (a Turkish trooper), one of his fellow-prisoners. He received his provision of food from his family, and he induced his wife one day, on the occasion of her taking him his dinner, to conceal, in the basket of food, the instruments he had used in his trade, viz., a cleaver, a knife, and a pair of hooks. I must here observe, that those lunatics who do not appear dangerous have lighter chains than others, and the chains of the person in question were of this description. When he had taken his meal, he proceeded to liberate himself; and as the cells communicated by the back, he soon reached that of his nearest neighbour, who, de

lighted to see him free, exclaimed, "How is this? Who cut your chains?" "I did," replied the first, "and here are my implements." "Excellent," rejoined the other, "cut mine too." "Certainly," said he; and he proceeded to liberate not only one, but two, three, and four of his fellow-prisoners. Now follows the tragical part of the story. No keepers were present—the man who possessed the cleaver attacked the poor Delec, chained and unarmed as he was; slaughtered him; and after dividing his body, hung it on the hooks within the window of the cell, and believed himself to be—what he was—a butcher.

In a few minutes the liberated lunatics became uproarious; and one of them growing alarmed, forced open the door by which the keepers usually entered, found one of them, and gave the alarm. The keeper instantly proceeded to the cell, and seeing the body of the murdered man, exclaimed,

"What, have you succeeded in killing that Delec? he was the plague of my life." "I have," answered the delinquent; "and here he hangs for sale." "Most excellent," replied the keeper, "but do not let him hang here; it will disgrace us: let us bury him." "Where?" asked the maniac, still holding his cleaver in his hand. "Here in the cell," replied the other, "and then the fact can never be discovered." In an instant he threw down his cleaver, and began to dig busily with his

hands. In the mean time, the keeper entered by the back of the cell, and throwing a collar over his neck, instantly chained him and so finished this tragedy.

Some time since, the brother of the person who gave the following anecdote, on the occasion of his visiting the Máristán, was accosted by one of the maniacs by name, and greeted with the usual salutations, followed by a melancholy entreaty that he would deliver him from that place. On examining him particularly, he found him to be an old friend; and he was distressed by his entreaties to procure for him his liberation, and perplexed what to do. The lunatic assured him he was not insane, and at length the visitor resolved on applying for his release. Accordingly, he addressed himself to the head keeper on the subject, stated that he was much surprised by the conversation of the patient, and concluded by requesting his liberation. The keeper answered that he did appear sane at that time, but that perhaps in an hour he might be raving.

The visitor, by no means satisfied by the reply of the keeper, and overcome by the rational arguments of the lunatic, urged his request, and at length he consented, saying, "Well, you can try him." This being arranged, in a short time the two friends set out together; and, engaged in conversation, they passed along the street, when suddenly the maniac seized the other by the throat, ex-

claiming, "Help, O Muslims! here is a madman escaped from the Máristán." He wisely suffered himself to be dragged back in no gentle manner to the very cell whence he had released the poor lunatic; and the latter, on entering, called loudly for a collar and chain for a maniac he had found in the street, escaped from the Máristán. The keeper immediately brought the collar and chain; and while pretending to obey his orders, slipped it over his neck, and secured him in his former quarters, I need not say, to the satisfaction of his would-be deliverer.

Our conductor also related, that some years ago, a maniac, having escaped from his cell in the Máristán, when the keepers had retired for the night, ascended the lofty mád'neh of the adjoining sepulchral mosque, the tomb of the Sultán Kala'oon. Finding there, in the gallery, a Muëddin, chanting one of the night-calls, uttering, with the utmost power of his voice, the exclamation "Yá Rabb!" (O Lord!) he seized him by the neck. The terrified Muëddin cried out, "I seek God's protection from the accursed devil! God is most great!"—"I am not a devil," said the madman, "to be destroyed by the words, 'God is most great!'" (Here I should tell you that these words are commonly believed to have the effect here ascribed to them, that of destroying a devil.) "Then what art thou?" said the Muëddin. "I am a madman,"

answered the other, "escaped from the Máristán." "O welcome!" rejoined the Muëddin: "praise be to God for thy safety! come, sit down, and amuse me with thy conversation." So the madman thus began: "Why do you call out so loud, 'O Lord!' Do you not know that God can hear you as well if you speak low?" "True," said the other, "but I call that men also may hear." "Sing," rejoined the lunatic; "*that* will please me." And upon this, the other commenced a kind of chant, with the ridiculous nature of which he so astonished some servants of the Máristán, who, as usual, were sitting up in a coffee-shop below, that they suspected some strange event had happened, and hastily coming up, secured the madman.

After what I have told you of the miserable creatures at present confined in the Máristán, I am very happy to add, that their condition will, I believe, in a few weeks, be greatly ameliorated. They are, I have since heard, to be removed to an hospital, where they will be under the superintendence of a celebrated French surgeon, Clot Bey.

I now return to the subject of the mosques.

Proceeding still southwards along the main street, we arrived at a fine mosque, called the Ashrafeeyeh, on the right. It was built by the Sultán El-Ashraf Barsabáy, consequently between the

years 825-41 (A.D. 1421 *et seq.*). Frequently criminals are hanged against one of the grated windows of this mosque; as the street before it is generally very much crowded with passengers.

Still proceeding along the main street, through that part of it called the Ghóreeh (which is a large bázár, or market), we arrive at the two fine mosques of the Sultán El-Ghóree, facing each other, one on each side of the street, and having a roof of wood extending from one to the other. They were both completed in the year of the Flight 909 (A.D. 1503-4). That on the left, El-Ghóree designed as his tomb; but he was not buried in it.

Arriving at the southernmost part of the main street, we have on our right the great mosque of the Sultán El-Mu-ciyad, which was founded in the year of the Flight 819 (A.D. 1416-17). It surrounds a spacious square court, and contains the remains of its royal founder, and of some of his family. It has a noble dome, and a fine lofty entrance-porch at the right extremity of the front. Its two great mād'nehs, which rise from the towers of the gate called Báb-Zuweyleh (the southern gate of that portion of the metropolis which constituted the old city), I have already mentioned.

Of the mosques in the *suburban* districts of the

metropolis, the most remarkable are those of the Sultán Hasan and of Ibn-Tooloon, or, as the name is commonly pronounced, Teyloon.

The great mosque of the Sultán Hasan, which is situated near the citadel, and is the most lofty of the edifices of Cairo, was founded in the year of the Flight 757 (A.D. 1356). It is a very noble pile; but it has some irregularities which are displeasing to the eye; as, for instance, the disparity of its two má'd'nehs. The great má'd'neh is nearly three hundred feet in height, measured from the ground. At the right extremity of the north-east side of the mosque is a very fine lofty entrance-porch. From this, a zigzag passage conducts us to a square hypæthral hall, or court, in the centre of which is a tank, and near this, a reservoir with spouts, for the performance of ablution; each crowned with a cupola. On each of the four sides of the court is a hall with an arched roof and open front. That opposite the entrance is the largest, and is the principal place of worship. Its arched roof is about seventy feet in width. It is constructed of brick and plastered (as are the other three arches), and numerous small glass lamps, and two lanterns of bronze, are suspended from it. The lower part of the end wall is lined with coloured marbles. Beyond it is a square saloon, over which is the great dome, and in the centre of this saloon is the tomb of the royal founder. Most of the decora-

tions of this mosque are very elaborate and elegant, but the building, in many parts, needs repair.

The great mosque of Ibn-Tooloon (or, as it is more commonly called, Gámē' Teyloon), situated in the southern part of the metropolis, is a very interesting building. It was founded in the year of the Flight 263 (A.D. 876-7), and was the principal mosque of the city El-Katáë, a city nearly a century older than El-Káhireh. The space which it occupies is about 400 feet square. It is constructed of brick, covered with plaster, and consists of arcades surrounding a square court; in the centre of which is a tank for ablution, under a square stone building, surmounted by a dome. The arches in this mosque are slightly pointed: this is very remarkable, as it proves, as the mosque was constructed A.D. 876-7, and has never been rebuilt, that the Eastern pointed arch is more ancient than the Gothic. This remark I borrow from my brother's manuscript notes. A great *mál'neh*, with winding stairs round its exterior, stands on the north-west side of the mosque; with which it is only connected by an arched gateway. The whole of this great mosque is in a sad state of decay; and not even kept decently clean, excepting where the mats are spread. It is the most ancient Arabian building, excepting the Nilometer of Er-Ródah (which is about 12 years older), now

existing in Egypt: for the mosque of 'Amr, though founded more than two centuries before, has often been rebuilt.

In the neighbourhood of the mosque above described is a large ruined castle or palace, called Kal'at el-Kebsh (or the Castle of the Ram*), occupying, and partly surrounding, an extensive rocky eminence. It was built in the middle of the seventh century after the Flight (or the thirteenth of our era). Its interior is occupied by modern buildings.†

The mosques of the seyyideh Zeyneb, the seyyideh Sekcenah, and the seyyideh Nefceseh (the first and second situated in the southern part of the metropolis, and the third in a small southern suburb without the gates) are highly venerated, but not very remarkable buildings.‡ There are many other mosques in Cairo well worthy of examination; but those which I have mentioned are the most distinguished.

* Kebsh not only signifies a *ram*, but is also the name of the mountain sheep (both male and female) which is found in the deserts adjacent to Egypt.

† A few years ago, much remained of its principal gateway, which, I am told, had a noble appearance, being very lofty, and of a simple style of architecture.

‡ The seyyideh Zeyneb was the daughter of Imám 'Alee, the cousin and son-in-law of the Prophet; Sekcenah was the daughter of Hoseyn, the son of 'Alee; and Nefceseh was the great-granddaughter of Hasan, the son of 'Alee.

I have been surprised at my having visited the most sacred of the mosques of Cairo without exciting the smallest suspicion of my being a Christian. A few days ago a party of Englishmen were refused admission into the Hasaneyn. They were conducted by a janissary of the Páshá, and he was exceedingly enraged against the officers of the mosque. They seized him, however, and drew him into the mosque, and closing the doors and windows, detained him, shutting out his party ; but the interpreter of the Englishmen, being a Muslim, obtained admission by a back door, and liberated the prisoner.

There are, in Cairo, many public buildings, besides the mosques, which attract attention. Among these are several *Tckeeyehs*, or convents for *Darweeshes* and others, mostly built by Turkish Páshás, for the benefit of their countrymen. Some of these are very handsome structures.

Many of the *Sebeels* (or public fountains) are also remarkable buildings. The general style of a large *sebeel* may be thus described. The principal part of the front is of a semicircular form, with three windows of brass grating. Within each window is a trough of water ; and when any one would drink, he puts his hand through one of the lowest apertures of the grating, and dips in the trough a brass mug, which is chained to one of the bars. Above the windows is a wide coping of

wood. Over this part of the building is a public schoolroom, with an open front, formed of pillars and arches; and at the top is another wide coping of wood. Some of these buildings are partly constructed of alternate courses of black and white marble.

Hóds, or watering-places for beasts of burden, are also very numerous in Cairo. The trough is of stone, and generally in an arched recess, over which is a public schoolroom.

There are, as my brother has remarked, about sixty or seventy Hammáms, or public baths, in Cairo. Some are exclusively for men, some only for women: others, for men in the morning, and for women in the afternoon. When the bath is appropriated to women, a piece of white cotton is hung over the door. The apartments are paved with marble, have fountains and tanks, and are surmounted by cupolas, pierced with small round holes for the admission of light.

The last of the buildings I shall mention are the Kahwehs, or coffee-shops, of which Cairo contains above a thousand. Only coffee is supplied at these; the persons who frequent them taking their own pipes and tobacco.

LETTER XIII.

December, 1842.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

FROM the city, you must now accompany me, in imagination, to the citadel. If you could do so in reality, you would be amply repaid for the trouble of ascending its steep acclivities ; not by the sight of any very remarkable object within its walls, but by gazing on one of the most striking and interesting views in the Eastern world. The citadel (El-Kat'ah) is situated at the south-eastern extremity of the metropolis, upon an extensive, flat-topped, rocky eminence, about 250 feet above the level of the plain, and near the point of Mount Mukattam, which completely commands it. It was founded by Saláh-ed-Deen (the famous Saladin), in the year of the Flight 572 (A.D. 1176-7); but not finished till 604; since which latter period it has been the usual residence of the sultáns and governors of Egypt. Before it is a spacious square, called the Rumeyleh, where a market is held, and where conjurers, musicians, and storytellers are often seen, each surrounded by a ring of idlers.

The Báb el-'Azab is the principal gate of the

citadel. Within this is a steep and narrow road, partly cut through the rock ; so steep, that in some parts steps are cut to render the ascent and descent less difficult than it would otherwise be for the horses and camels, &c. This confined road was the chief scene of the massacre of the Menilooks in the year 1811. I may perhaps have something to say, on a future occasion, respecting that tragedy.

A great part of the interior of the citadel is obstructed by ruins and rubbish, and there are many dwelling-houses and some shops within it. The most remarkable monument that it contains is a great mosque, built by the Sultán Ibn-Kala'-oon, in the early part of the eighth century after the Flight (or the fourteenth of our era). It is in a ruinous state, and no longer used as a place of worship. It consists of porticoes, surrounding a square court.

On the north-west of this mosque, stood, about twelve or thirteen years ago, a noble ruin—an old palace, commonly called Kasr Yoosuf, or Decwán Yoosuf, and believed to have been the palace of Yoosuf Saláh-ed-Deen ; but erroneously. European travellers adopted the same opinion, and called it “ Joseph’s Hall.” My brother informs me, on the authority of El-Makreezee, that this noble structure was built by the prince before-mentioned.*

* The Sultán Ibn-Kala'-oon.

Huge ancient columns of granite were employed in its construction; their capitals of various kinds, and ill-wrought, but the shafts very fine. It had a large dome, which had fallen some time before the ruin was taken down. On entering it was observed, in the centre of the south-eastern side, a niche, marking the direction of Mekkeh, like that of a mosque, which in other respects this building did not much resemble. Both within and without are remains of Arabic inscriptions, in large letters of wood; but of which many had fallen long before its demolition.

A little to the west of the site of the old palace were the remains of a very massive building, called "the house of Yoosuf Saláh-ed-Deen," partly on the brow, and partly on the declivity of the hill. From this spot, on the edge of the hill, we have a most remarkable view of the metropolis and its environs. Its numerous *mád'nehs* and domes, its flat-topped houses, with the sloping sheds which serve as ventilators, and a few palms and other trees among the houses, give it an appearance quite unlike that of any European city. Beyond the metropolis we see the Nile, intersecting a verdant plain; with the towns of Boolák, Masr Ateekah, and El-Geezeh; on the south, the aqueduct, and the mounds of rubbish which occupy the site of El-Fustát, and in the distance, all the pyramids of Memphis, and the palm groves on the site of that

city. On the north of the metropolis are seen the plains of Heliopolis and Goshen. No one with a spark of feeling can look unmoved on such a prospect : the physical sight has enough to charm it ; but the deepest interest is felt while, in gazing on this scene, the mind's eye runs rapidly over the historic pages of the Word of God. The oppression and the deliverance of the tribes of Israel, and the miracles which marked that deliverance, all these events are overwhelmingly present to the memory, while looking on the scenes they have consecrated—their subsequent prosperity, disobedience, and punishment, all pass in melancholy review. O ! that the power of Almighty God may be present with those who labour for their restoration, and “ may they at length,” as Mr. Wilberforce beautifully expresses his petition on their behalf, “ may they at length acknowledge their long-neglected Saviour.” Well have they been described as “ tribes of the wandering foot and weary breast.” Often “ houseless, homeless, and proscribed,” they endure every indignity and become inured to every hardship ; but the eye of God is still upon them, and his ear is open to their prayers. How true it is that hitherto “ they *will* not turn to Him that they might receive mercy,” but they are not forsaken ; and while we hear with thankfulness of the zeal of many from among their own people in the

cause of Christianity, we trust that the day is not far off when, rather than

“ Weep for those who wept by Babel’s stream,
Whose shrines are desolate, whose land a dream,”

we shall rejoice in the prospect of that blessed time when the Lord God shall “ give unto them beauty for ashes, the oil of joy for mourning, and the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness ;” when all nations of the earth shall “ rejoice with Jerusalem, and be delighted with the abundance of her glory.”

Adjacent to the Kasr Yoosuf is a very large mosque, not yet completed ; a costly structure, with a profusion of alabaster columns ; but of a mixed style of architecture, which I cannot much admire, though the effect of the building, when it is finished, will certainly be grand. I need hardly add, that the founder of this sumptuous edifice is Mohammad 'Alec, by whose name it is to be called.

The famous well of Yoosuf Salâh-ed-Deen, so called because it was excavated in the reign of that Sultán, is near the southern angle of the old great mosque. It is entirely cut in the calcareous rock, and consists of two rectangular shafts, one below the other ; with a winding stairway round each to the bottom. In descending the first shaft

my heart and limbs failed me, and I contented myself with seeing as much as I could through the large apertures between the stairs and the well. Our guide bore a most picturesque aspect ; she was a young girl, and if I might judge by her beautiful dark eyes, her countenance must have been lovely. She held a lighted taper in each hand, and stepped backwards before us, down the dark and (in my opinion) dangerous descent. Accustomed to the winding way, she continued fearlessly through the gloom, while her light and graceful figure receded slowly, and the glimmer of her tapers shone on the damp rock on either side, and made the darkness seem intense.

The upper shaft is about 155 feet deep, and the lower about 125 ; therefore the whole depth of the well is about 280 feet. The water, which is rather brackish, is raised by a *sákiyeh* at the top of each shaft.

There are several large edifices in the modern Turkish style, worthy in this country of being called palaces, in the southern quarter of the citadel, and in the quarter of the Janisaries. which did not form a part of the *old* citadel, and which lies to the east of the latter. Some of the walls, together with many houses, on the northern slope of the hill, were overthrown by the explosion of a magazine of powder, in the year 1824. On the

western slope of the hill is an arsenal, with a cannon-foundry, &c.

Mount Mukattam overlooks both the town and citadel of Cairo, and is composed of a yellowish calcareous rock, abounding with testaceous fossils: it is entirely destitute of verdure. Upon its flat summit, a strong fort has been erected, with a steep causeway, upon high narrow arches ascending to it. On each side of this causeway, the rock has been extensively quarried. On the western side of the mountain are many ancient sepulchral grottoes; but they are difficult of access, and I do not propose visiting them. My brother has seen them, and he could find no traces of hieroglyphics, or other decorations, in any of them.

On the north of the metropolis are many gardens, and, in the season of the inundation, many lakes, in one of which (Birket er Raṭlee) abundance of lotus plants are seen in blossom in the month of September. In the same tract is a ruined mosque, which was founded by Ez-Zāhir Beybars, in the year of the Flight 665 (A.D. 1266-7). The French converted it into a fort.

Opposite the Bāb en-Nasr is a large cemetery, occupying a desert tract; and here is the tomb of the lamented Burckhardt.

The great Eastern cemetery, in the sandy waste between the metropolis and the mountain, contains

the tombs of many of the Memlook Sultáns. Some of these mausolea (which have been erroneously regarded by some travellers as the tombs of the Khaleefehs) are very noble buildings; particularly those of the Sultans Barkook,* and Káid-Bey,† or Káitbey. None of the tombs of the Khaleefehs of Egypt now exist: Khán el-Khaleelee (as I have mentioned in a former letter) occupies their site. The central part of this cemetery contains several alms-houses, and is commonly called Káid-Bey. Here, and for some distance towards the citadel, the tombs are closely crowded together, and the whole cemetery, being intersected by roads, like streets in a town, may justly be called a Necropolis, or City of the Dead. All the tract is desert; and few persons are to be met here, excepting on the Friday morning, when it is the custom of the Muslims to visit the tombs of their relations and friends. Numerous groups of women are then seen repairing to the cemetery; each bearing a palm-branch, to lay upon the tomb she is about to visit.

On the south of the metropolis is another great cemetery, called El-Karáfeh, still more extensive, but not containing such grand mausolea. This, also, is in a desert plain. Many of its tombs are

* Built by his son and successor Fárag, in the beginning of the ninth century after the Flight, or the fifteenth of our era.

† Built about a century after the former.

very beautiful: one kind is particularly elegant, consisting of an oblong monument, generally of marble, canopied by a cupola, or by a pyramidal roof, supported by marble columns. In the southern part of this cemetery is the tomb of the celebrated Imám Esh-Sháfe'ee, the founder of one of the four orthodox sects of El-Islám, that sect to which the people of Cairo chiefly belong. This Imám died in the year of the Flight 204 (A.D. 819-20). The present mosque which covers his tomb is a plain whitewashed building, with a dome cased with lead. This mosque has been twice rebuilt, the present being the third building, and about two centuries and a half old. A little to the north of it is a low building, which is the burial-place of the present Páshá's family. Between this cemetery and the mountain are many ancient mummy-pits choked with rubbish. They evidently show that this tract was the Necropolis of Egyptian Babylon.

Along the western side of the metropolis are several lakes and gardens. The most remarkable of the latter are those of Ibraheem Páshá; but these I might more properly call plantations. I have mentioned them in a former letter. A great portion of the tract they occupy was, a few years ago, covered by extensive mounds of rubbish, which, though not so large nor so lofty as those on the east and south, concealed much of the town from the view of persons approaching it in this

direction. All the camels, asses, &c., that die in the metropolis are cast upon the surrounding hills of rubbish, where hungry dogs and vultures feed on them.

On the bank of the river, between Boolák and Masr el-'Ateckah, are several palaces, or mansions, among which is one belonging to Ibraheem Páshá, besides a large square building called Kasr El-'Eynee (which is an establishment for the education of youths destined for the service of the government), and a small convent of Darweeshes. A little to the south of these buildings is the entrance of the khaleeg, or canal of Cairo; and just above this commences the aqueduct by which the water of the Nile is conveyed to the Citadel. A large hexagonal building, about sixty or seventy feet high, contains the sákiyehs which raise the water to the channel of the aqueduct. The whole length of the aqueduct is about two miles. It is built of stone; and consists of a series of narrow arches, very gradually decreasing in height, as the ground has a slight ascent, imperceptible to the eye. The water, towards the end of its course, enters a subterranean channel, and is raised from a well in the Citadel. This aqueduct was built (in the place of a former one of wood) in the early part of the tenth century after the Flight (or the sixteenth of our era). To the south of the aqueduct lies the town of Masr

el-'Ateekah, the principal houses of which face the river, and the island of Er-Ródah.

This island (the name of which signifies the Island of the Garden) is about a mile and three-quarters in length, and a third of a mile in breadth. The branch of the river on its eastern side is very narrow; and when the Nile is at its lowest point, the bed of this narrow branch becomes nearly dry. The island contains several pleasure-houses and gardens, and the palm, the orange, the lime, the citron, the pomegranate, the vine, the sycamore (which affords a deep and broad shade), and the banana, form a luxuriant variety. The banana is especially beautiful; its long leaves spreading and drooping from the summit of the stem, like the branches of the palm-tree. On this verdant island we find also the henna-tree, so much esteemed by the women of this country for the dye afforded by its leaves, and so justly valued by persons of all countries for the delicious perfume which its flowers exhale. But the great charm of Er-Ródah is a garden belonging to Ibraheem Páshá, under the able superintendence of Mr. Traill, who has rendered it the most attractive thing of its kind in the neighbourhood of Cairo.

Masr el-'Ateekah, though more than a mile in length, is a small straggling town, lying along the bank of the Nile, and occupying a part of the site

of El-Fustát. Many of the vessels from Upper Egypt unload here ; and a constant intercourse is kept up, by means of numerous ferry-boats, between this town and El-Geezeh. Behind the town are extensive low mounds of rubbish, covering the rest of the site of El-Fustát. In this desolate tract are situated the Mosque of 'Amr, the Kasr esh-Shema, and several Christian convents.

The Mosque of 'Amr has been so often repaired and rebuilt, that almost every part of it may now be regarded as modern : yet there is something very imposing in the associations connected with this building, where the conqueror of Egypt, surrounded by "companions of the Prophet," so often prayed.

The building occupies a space about 350 feet square ; its plan is a square court, surrounded by porticos, and its whole appearance very simple and plain. The exterior is formed by high bare walls of brick. The portico at the end of the court towards Mekkeh has six rows of columns ; that on the left side, four rows ; that on the right, three ; and on the entrance side only one row. The columns are of veined marble ; some, being too small, have an additional plinth, or an inverted capital, at the base. The capitals are of many different kinds, having been taken, as also the columns, from various ancient buildings.

The Kasr esh-Shema is an old Roman fortress,

which was the stronghold of Egyptian Babylon, and the head-quarters of the Greek army, which the Arabs, under 'Amr, contended with and vanquished. It is said that this building was, in ancient times, illuminated with candles on the first night of every month; and hence it derived the name it now bears, which signifies "the pavilion of the candles." The area which it occupies extends about a thousand feet from north to south, and six or seven hundred feet from east to west. Its walls are very lofty, constructed of brick with several courses of stone, and strengthened by round towers. The interior is crowded with houses and shops, occupied by Christians, and it contains several churches; among which is that of St. Sergius, where a small grotto, somewhat resembling an oven, is shown as the retreat of the Holy Family. The Egyptian Babylon was situated on a rocky eminence, on the south-east of the Kasr esh-Shema. El-Makreezee and other Arab historians prove that this was the Masr which 'Amr besieged and took. There was another fortress here, besides the Kasr esh-Shema, called the Kasr Bábelyoon (or the pavilion of Babylon). This, I am told, was the spacious square building since called Istabl 'Antar (or the stable of Antar), which in later times became a convent, and is now converted into a powder-magazine. To the west of the hill of Babylon, and close to the Nile, is the small village

of Atar en-Nebee ; so called from a stone, bearing the impression of the Prophet's foot, preserved in a small mosque, which rises, with a picturesque effect, from the verge of the river.

El-Geezeh, which is opposite to Masr el-Ateekah, is a small poor town, surrounded, excepting on the side towards the river, by a mean wall, which would scarcely avail to defend it from a party of Bedaweess. It has been supposed to occupy a part of the site of Memphis ; but this conjecture is known to be erroneous.

I must mention also a few places north of the metropolis. A fine straight road, bordered by mulberry-trees, sycamores, and acacias, leads to Shubra, the favourite country residence of the Páshá, rather more than three miles from Cairo. The palace of Shubra is situated by the Nile. Its exterior is picturesque, especially as viewed from the river, and it has an extensive garden laid out with much taste.

About six miles distant from the northern gates of the metropolis, towards the north-north-east, is the site of Heliopolis, the City of the Sun, called by the Egyptians, "On ;" and by the Arabs, "Eyn-Shems," or, "the fountain of the sun ;" though, to bear this signification, the name should, I am told, be written "Eyn esh-Shems," which may also be interpreted, "the rays, or light of the sun." The route from Cairo to the site of Heliopolis lies

along the desert ; but near the limits of the cultivable soil. This part of the desert is a sandy flat, strewn with pebbles, and with petrified wood, pudding-stone, red sandstone, &c. A small mountain of red sandstone, called "El-Gebel el-Ahmar" (or "the red mountain"), lies at a short distance to the right, or east. On approaching within a mile of the site of Heliopolis, the traveller passes by the village of El-Matareeyeh, where are pointed out an old sycamore, under the shade of which (according to tradition), the Holy Family reposed, and a well which afforded them drink. The balsam-tree was formerly cultivated in the neighbouring fields : it thrived nowhere else in Egypt ; and it was believed that it flourished in this part because it was watered from the neighbouring well. The name given by the Arabs to Heliopolis was perhaps derived from this well. In a space above half a mile square, surrounded by walls of crude brick, which now appear like ridges of earth, were situated the sacred edifices of Heliopolis. The only remaining monument appearing above the soil is a fine obelisk, standing in the midst of the enclosure. The Arabs call it "the obelisk of Pharaoh." It is formed of a single block of red granite, about sixty-two feet in height, and six feet square at the lower part. The soil has risen four or five feet above its base ; for, in the season of the inundation, the water of the Nile enters the enclosure by a

branch of the canal of Cairo. Upon each of its sides is sculptured the same hieroglyphic inscription, bearing the name of Osirtesen the First, who reigned not very long after the age when the pyramids were constructed. There are a few other monuments of his time: the obelisk of the Fer-yoo'm is one of them. 'Abd El-Lateef, in speaking of Eyn-Shems, says that he saw there (about the end of the twelfth century of the Christian era) the remains of several colossal statues, and *two* great obelisks, one of which had fallen, and was broken in two pieces. These statues, and the broken obelisk, probably now lie beneath the accumulated soil.

Such are the poor remains of Heliopolis, that celebrated seat of learning, where Eudoxus and Plato studied thirteen years, and where Herodotus derived much of his information respecting Egypt. In the time of Strabo, the *city* was altogether deserted; but the famous temple of the sun still remained, though much injured by Cambyses. The bull Mevis was worshipped at Heliopolis, as Apis was at Memphis. It is probable that the "land of Goshen" was immediately adjacent to the province of Heliopolis, on the north-north-east.

Thirteen miles from Cairo, in the same direction as Heliopolis, is the village of El-Khánkeh, once a large town, and long the camp of the regular troops. El-Khánkeh is two miles to the north of

the Lake of the Pilgrims, which is so called because the pilgrims collect and encamp by it before they proceed in a body to Mekkeh. This lake is more than two miles in length, from west to east, and a mile in breadth. It is filled by the canal of Cairo during the season of the inundation.

LETTER XIV.

December, 1842.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

YOU must bear with me if I recur to the subject of the haunted house, for our disturbances came to a sort of climax which I think as curious as it was exciting, and so strikingly characteristic, that I must describe to you the particulars of the case.

Ramadán ended about a month ago, and with it ended the comparative quiet of our nights. To describe to you all the various noises by which we have been disturbed is impossible. Very frequently the door of the room in which we were sitting late in the evening, within two or three hours of midnight, was violently knocked at many short intervals: at other times, it seemed as if something very heavy fell upon the pavement close under one of the windows of the same room, or of one adjoining, and as these rooms were on the top of the house, we imagined at first that some stones or other things had been thrown by a neighbour, but we could find nothing outside after the noises

I have mentioned. The usual noises continued during the greater part of the night, and were generally like a heavy trampling, like the walking of a person in large clogs, varied by knocking at the doors of many of the apartments, and at the large water-jars which are placed in recesses in the galleries. Our maids have come and gone like shadows ever since our residence here, excepting during Ramadán, and *sauf qui peut* seems to have been their maxim; for they believe that one touch of an 'efreet would render them demoniacs.

A few evenings since, a maid, who had only passed two days in the house, rushed to our usual sitting room, whence she had just removed our supper, exclaiming that a tall figure in white had stood with arms outspread at the entrance of the upper gallery to prevent her passing. We all immediately returned with her, and as you will anticipate, found nothing. This white figure our servants call a saint, and they assert that the house is haunted by a saint and an 'efreet. One man assures us that this same saint, who is, to use his expression, "of dazzling whiteness," applied himself, one night, to the bucket of the well in the court, and, having drawn up water, performed his ablutions and said his prayers. Frightening servant maids is rather inconsistent, I ween, with such conduct. Certainly the servants do not complain

without reason, and it is particularly grievous, because there is not, throughout the whole healthful part of the city, one comfortable house vacant.

During Ramadán, the Muslims believe that 'efreets are imprisoned, and thus our servants accounted for our freedom from annoyance during that month. We on the other hand believed we had bolted and barred out the offender, by having discovered his place of ingress, and were much disappointed at finding our precautions useless.

A few days since, our doorkeeper (a new servant), complained that he not only could not sleep, but that he *never had* slept since his arrival more than a few minutes at a time, and that he never could sleep consistently with his duty, unless the 'efreet should be destroyed. He added, that he came up every night into the upper gallery leading to our sleeping rooms, and there he found the figure I have mentioned, walking round and round the gallery; and concluded with an anxious request that my brother would consent to his firing at the phantom, saying that devils have always been destroyed by the discharge of fire-arms. My brother consented to the proposal, provided the servant used neither ball nor small shot. Two days and nights passed, and we found on the third, that the doorkeeper was waiting to ascertain whether the spectre were a saint or a devil, and had

therefore resolved to question him on the ensuing night before he fired.

The night came, and it was one of unusual darkness. We had really forgotten our man's intention, although we were talking over the subject of the disturbances until nearly midnight, and speculating upon the cause, in the room where my children were happily sleeping, when we were startled by a tremendous discharge, which was succeeded by the deep hoarse voice of the door-keeper, exclaiming "There he lies, the accursed!" and a sound as of a creature struggling and gasping for breath. In the next moment, the man loudly called his fellow servant, crying, "Come up, the accursed is struck down before me!"—and this was followed by such mysterious sounds that we believed either a man had been shot, and was in his last agonies, or that our man had accidentally shot himself.

My brother went round the gallery, while I and my sister-in-law stood like children trembling hand in hand, and my boys mercifully slept (as young ones do sleep), sweetly and soundly through all the confusion and distress. It appeared that the man used not only ball-cartridge, but put two charges of powder, with two balls, into his pistol. I will describe the event, however, in his own words. "The 'efreet passed me in the gallery

and repassed me, when I thus addressed it. ‘Shall we quit this house, or will you do so?’ ‘You shall quit it,’ he answered; and passing me again, he threw dust into my right eye. ‘This proved he was a devil,” continued the man; “and I wrapped my cloak around me, and watched the spectre as it receded. It stopped in that corner, and I observed attentively its appearance. It was tall and perfectly white. I stooped, and before it moved again, discharged my pistol, which I had before concealed, and the accursed was struck down before me, and here are the remains.” So saying, he picked up a small burnt mass, which my brother showed us afterwards, resembling more the sole of a shoe than anything else, but perforated by fire in several places, and literally burnt to a cinder. This, the man asserted (agreeably with a popular opinion), was always the relic when a devil was destroyed, and it lay on the ground under a part of the wall where the bullets had entered.

The noise which succeeded the report, and which filled me with horror, is, and must ever remain, a mystery. On the following morning we closely examined the spot, and found nothing that could throw light on the subject. The burnt remains do not help us to a conclusion; one thing, however, I cannot but believe—that some one

who had personated the evil one suffered some injury, and that the darkness favoured his escape. It is truly very ridiculous in these people to believe that the remains of a devil resemble the sole of an old shoe. It reminds me of the condensed spirits of whom we read in the "Thousand and One Nights," who were (so say tradition) bottled up, hermetically sealed, and thrown into the sea, by order of Suleyman the son of Da-ood.

I need scarcely say that the servant was reprimanded for disobeying his orders with regard to charging the pistol. With this one exception, he has proved ever obedient, most respectful, and excellent in every point. I really believe the man was so worn out by want of sleep, and exasperated by finding the same figure nightly pacing round the galleries, and preventing his rest, that he became desperate.

You will remember the story, in the "Thousand and One Nights," of the revenge threatened by an 'Efreet on a merchant, for having unconsciously slain his son by throwing a date-stone, which occasioned a mortal wound. The fear of unknowingly injuring an 'Efreet and incurring his resentment is as strong as ever in the minds of these people. They always say "Destoor" (permission) when about to step down from any elevated place, or

when they see another person going to do so. A poor little boy fell on his face the other day near our house, and hurt himself certainly, but before he cried, he exclaimed, "Destoor!" I suppose concluding that if he had fallen on an 'Efreet unwittingly, the asking permission after the fact might cancel the offence; and having done so he was satisfied, and cried heartily.

LETTER XV.

Cairo, February, 1833.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

YOU know how much I desired to obtain access to respectable hareems, as well those of the highest as those of the middle classes ; and now that my hope has been realized, I find that I did not desire what would disappoint my expectations. Indeed I have felt exceedingly interested in observing the manners of the ladies of this country ; in some cases I have been amused by their familiarity, and in many fascinated by the natural grace of their deportment. I am aware that by description I cannot do them justice, but I will endeavour to give you faithful pictures of those hareems I have already seen ; and first I must tell you that I am indebted exceedingly to the kindness of Mrs. Sieder, the lady of our excellent resident missionary, who has gained the confidence of the most distinguished hareems in this country, and has given me some introductions I particularly desired, without any reserve, and in the most ready and friendly



Turkish Lady in the ordinary dress worn in an Egyptian Harem.

manner. Among the ladies to whom she has introduced me are those of Habeeb Eféndee, the late governor of Cairo ; and in relating to you the particulars of my first visit to them, I give you an account of my initiation into the mysteries of the high hareems.

I had been some time in Cairo before I dared to mount the “ high ass ;” for their appearance is really formidable. I adopted the plan followed by many ladies here, that of a prayer-carpet spread on a common saddle ; but in visiting the *high* hareems, it became necessary to ride the *high* ass ; and I found it infinitely more agreeable than my usual donkey’s equipment. Certainly I was obliged constantly to stoop my head under the gateways, and came nearly in contact with some projecting first-floor windows ; therefore I found it necessary to be on the alert ; but setting aside these objections, there is no comparison to be made between the “ high ass” and the ordinary donkeys—the former is so decidedly preferable.

When we arrived at the house of Habeeb Eféndee, and had passed the outer entrance, I found that the harem apartments, as in other houses of the great in this country, are not confined to the first and upper floors, but form a separate and complete house, distinct from that of the men. Having passed a spacious hall, paved with marble, we were

met at the door of the first apartment by the elder daughter of Habeeb Eféndee, who gave me the usual Eastern salutation, touching her lips and forehead with her right hand, and then insisted on removing my riding-dress herself, although surrounded by slaves. This was a mark of extraordinary condescension, as you will presently see. In the houses of the middle classes, the ladies generally honour their visitors by disrobing them of their riding-dress; but in the high hareems this office is generally performed by slaves, and only by a member of the family when a guest is especially distinguished.

In visiting those who are considered the noble of the land, I resume, under my Eastern riding costume, my English dress; thus avoiding the necessity of subjecting myself to any humiliation. In the Turkish in-door costume, the manner of my salutations must have been more submissive than I should have liked; while, as an Englishwoman, I am entertained by the most distinguished, not only as an equal, but generally as a superior. I have never given more than the usual salutation, excepting in the case of addressing elderly ladies, when my inclination leads me to distinguish them by respectfully bending, and lowering my right hand before I touch my lips and forehead, when I am presented, and when I leave them. On receiv-

ing sweetmeats, coffee, sherbet, or any refreshment, and on returning the cup, plate, &c., which contain them, I give always the customary salutation to the chief lady of the harem, whose situation on the divan points her out as the superior of the party.

At home, and when visiting ladies of the middle class, I wear the Turkish dress, which is delightfully comfortable, being admirably adapted to the climate of this country. I have never gone out but in the Eastern riding-dress, which I have already described to you.

When the lady I have mentioned had removed my surtout apparel, a slave in attendance received them in an exquisite pink kerchief of cashmere, richly embroidered with gold. The kerchiefs of this kind, in the hareems of the wealthy, are generally very elegant, but that was the most perfect specimen I have seen of correct and tasteful embroidery. The riding-dress was immediately taken into another room, according to a usual custom, which is observed for the purpose of creating a short delay, giving an opportunity to offer some additional refreshment when the guest has proposed to take her leave. My new acquaintance then conducted me to the divan, and placed me next to the seat of honour, which was reserved for her mother, the first cousin of the late Sultan Mahmoud,

who soon entered the room, and gave me a cordial welcome, assigning to me the most distinguished seat on her right hand, the same to which her daughter had conducted me, while the grandmother of Abbas Pasha sat on her left. She was soon followed by her second daughter, who greeted me with much politeness, and in a very elegant manner assured me that I was welcome. She was more richly attired than her sister ; therefore I will describe to you her dress.

She wore on her head a dark handkerchief twisted round a tarboosh, with a very splendid sprig of diamonds attached to the right side, and extending partly over her forehead. The sprig was composed of very large brilliants, disposed in the form of three lutes, in the centre, from each of which a branch extended, forming an oval shape, at least five inches in length. High on the left side of her head she wore a knot or slide of diamonds, through which was drawn a bunch of ringlets, which, from their position, appeared to be artificial ; her tarboosh had the usual blue silk tassel, but this was divided and hanging on either side. Her long vest and trowsers were of a dark flowered India fabric ; she wore round her waist a large and rich cashmere shawl ; and her neck was decorated with many strings of very large pearls, confined at intervals by gold beads. She was

in one respect strangely disfigured ; her eyebrows being painted with kohl, and united by the black pigment in a very broad and most unbecoming manner. Many women of all classes here assume this disguise : some apply the kohl to the eyebrows as well as to the eyes, with great delicacy ; but the lady in question had her eyebrows so remarkable, that her other features were deprived of their natural expression and effect.

A number of white slaves formed a large semicircle before us, and received from others, who waited in the ante-chamber, silver trays, containing glass dishes of sweetmeats. There were three spoons in each dish, and two pieces of sweetmeat in each spoon. These were immediately succeeded by coffee, which was also brought on silver trays ; the small china cups being, as usual, in stands, shaped like egg-cups ; but these were not, as in ordinary houses, simply of silver filagree, or plain, but decorated with diamonds. They were certainly elegant, but more costly than beautiful. The coffee is never handed on the tray, but gracefully presented by the attendant, holding the little stand between the thumb and finger of the right hand. After these refreshments a short time elapsed, when two slaves brought in sherbet on silver waiters, in exceedingly elegant cut-glass cups,

with saucers and covers. Each tray was covered with a round pink richly-embroidered cover, which the slave removed as she approached us. To receive our cups, of the contents of which, according to custom, we drank about two-thirds, another slave approached, with a large white embroidered kerchief, ostensibly for the purpose of wiping the mouth; but any lady would be thought quite a novice who did more than touch it with her lips.

In the course of conversation, I expressed my admiration of the Turkish language, and, to my surprise, the elder of the young ladies gave me a general invitation, and proposed to become my instructress: addressing herself to Mrs. Sieder with the most affectionate familiarity, she said, "O my sister, persuade your friend to come to me frequently, that I may teach her Turkish; in doing which, I shall learn her language, and we can read and write together." I thanked her for her very polite offer, but made no promise that I would become her pupil; foreseeing that it would lead to a very considerable waste of time. In all the hareems I have visited, Arabic is understood and spoken; so I do not expect any advantage from a knowledge of Turkish, unless I could devote to its study considerable attention.

The perfect good humour and cheerfulness which

pervaded this family-circle is well worthy of remark, and much engaged my thoughts during the morning of my visit. All that I observed of the manners of the Eastern women, at Habeeb Efendee's and elsewhere, leads me to consider the perfect contrast which the customs of Eastern life present to the whole construction of European society. If you have read Mr. Urquhart's 'Spirit of the East,' you have felt interested in his view of the life of the hareem, and have thought that the Eastern "home" which he represents in such a pleasing manner possesses considerable attractions. Believe me, there is much to fascinate and much to interest the mind in observing peculiarities in these people which have no parallel in the West; and I could furnish a letter on contrasts nearly as curious as Mr. Urquhart's.

How extraordinary it seems that girls, until they are given away in marriage, see only persons of their own sex, with the exception of a few very near male relations, and then receive as their future lord and master one with whom no previous acquaintance has been possible! This is so revolting to the mind of an Englishwoman, that the mere consideration of such a system (which indeed, I am told, is beyond what the rigour of the law requires) is intolerable; therefore I must observe, and admire all that is admirable, and endeavour to

forget what is so objectionable in the state of Eastern society.

Before our departure it was proposed that I should see their house ; and the elder daughter threw her arm round my neck, and thus led me through a magnificent room which was surrounded by divans ; the elevated portion of the floor was covered with India matting, and in the middle of the depressed portion was the most tasteful fountain I have seen in Egypt, exquisitely inlaid with black, red, and white marble. The ceiling was a beautiful specimen of highly-wrought arabesque work, and the walls as usual white-washed, and perfectly plain, with the exception of the lower portions, which, to the height of about six feet, were cased with Dutch tiles.

I was conducted up stairs in the same manner ; and I could not help feeling exceedingly amused at my situation ; and considering that these ladies are of the royal family of Turkey, you will see that I was most remarkably honoured.

When we approached the bath, we entered the reclining room, which was furnished with divans, and presented a most comfortable appearance ; but the heat and vapour were so extremely oppressive in the region of the bath, that we merely looked into it, and gladly returned to the cool gallery. I am not surprised that you are curious on the sub-

ject of the bath and the Eastern manner of using it; and I hope to devote a future letter to a description of the operation (for such indeed it may be styled), and the place in which that operation is performed.

On our reaching the stairs, the second daughter of Habeeb Efendee took her sister's place; and with her arm round my neck, we descended the stairs, and re-entered the room where I had received so kind a reception. When we rose to take our leave, the elder daughter received my riding-dress from a slave, and was about to attire me, when her sister said, "You took them off; it is for me to put them on." The elder lady partly consented, retaining the habarah, and thus they dressed me together. Then, after giving me the usual salutation, they each cordially pressed my hand, and kissed my cheek. We then descended into the court, attended by the ladies, and a crowd of white slaves. Having crossed the court, we arrived at the great gate, through which I had before passed, which was only closed by a large mat, suspended before it, forming the curtain of the harem. This mat was raised by black eunuchs, who poured from a passage without, and immediately after the ladies bade us farewell, and returned, followed by their slaves. The principal eunuch ascended first the mounting platform, and placed me on the donkey, while two others ar-

ranged my feet in the stirrups ; our own servants being kept in the background.

A few days after this visit, I received a second invitation from this hareem, with the polite assurance that they intended making a festival and fantasia for my amusement.

LETTER XVI.

March, 1843.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

I DOUBT whether I shall be bold enough to attempt anything like a description of the present political state of this country; but I shall here offer you a sketch of its past history, from the period of its conquest by the Arabs, which, I hope, will interest. For this purpose, I shall draw freely from my brother's manuscript notes.

In the 20th year of the Flight (A.D. 640-41), Egypt was conquered by the Arabs; and since that period, it has continued to be subject to Muslim rulers. It has been governed by Arab vice-roys, and by Turkish independent princes; by Arab khaleefehs; by a dynasty of Kurds; by Turkish and by Circassian Sultáns, who, in their youth, were Memlooks (or slaves): it has been annexed to the great Turkish empire, and governed by Turkish pashas, in conjunction with Memlooks; has become a prey to the Memlooks alone; been conquered by the French; wrested from them by the English, and restored to the Turks: it has been a scene of sanguinary contention between the

Turks and Memlooks; and is now again solely under a Turkish ruler. Of these various revolutions I shall give a short account.

During the space of nearly two centuries and a half the authority of the khaleefehs was maintained in Egypt by viceroys whom they appointed, and who were frequently changed. The first of these viceroys was 'Amr Ibn-el-'A's, the conqueror of the country. The history of their times, transmitted to us by Arab writers, contains, as far as it relates to Egypt, little that is worthy of mention. On the occasion of the overthrow of the dynasty of the Ummaweeyeh (or khaleefehs of the race of Umeyyeh), the seat of whose empire was Damascus, there ensued no change in the form of government to which Egypt had been subject; but the town of El-'Askar was then founded, and became the residence of the successive viceroys appointed by the new dynasty of the 'Abbaseeyeh (or khaleefehs descended from El-'Abbás, an uncle of the Prophet), who changed the seat of the Arabian empire to Baghdád.

At the close of the period above mentioned, the empire of the Khaleefehs of Baghdád had begun to decline: those princes had no longer sufficient power to overawe their lieutenants in distant provinces. The viceroy of the greater part of Northern Africa had already set the example of rebellion against the successor of the Prophet, and had

secured his independence; and now, at the close of the year of the Flight 269 (A.D. 883), the governor of Egypt, actuated by motives of self-defence, rather than ambition, threw off his allegiance to his sovereign, the Khaleefeh El-Moatamid, and rendered himself absolute master not only of Egypt, but also of Syria, after having governed the former country as viceroy during the space of fifteen years. This prince was Ahmad Ibn-Tooloon (commonly called Ibn Teyloon), the founder of the noble city of El-Katâë (which he made the seat of his government), and of the grand mosque which is called by his name, and which remains a proud monument of his reign. He was the son of a Turkish slave, who had been promoted to a high office in the court of Baghdád. Though he became the independent sovereign of Egypt, the Khaleefeh continued to be acknowledged, in that country, as the head of the religion; and, as such, was still named in the public Friday-prayers in the mosques. Four independent princes of the same family succeeded Ibn Tooloon; and thus, during rather more than twenty-two years, the khaleefehs of Baghdád remained deprived of one of the finest provinces of their wide empire. The dynasty of the Bence-Tooloon was overthrown in the year of the Flight 292 (A.D. 905) by Mohammod Ibn-Suleymán, who, at the head of a numerous army, set fire to El-Katâë, plundered

El-Fustát, and re-established the supreme authority of the khaleefehs in Egypt.

At the expiration of about thirty years after that period, the great Arabian Empire began to be dismembered on every side. In the year 323 (A.D. 935) a Ta'ta'r, or Turk, named Mohammiad El-Ikhsheed (or El-Akhsheed), succeeded, for the second time, to the government of Egypt, and soon after acquired the sole dominion of that country and of Syria. The latter was wrested from him; but it again became subject to his authority. This prince was the founder of the dynasty of Ikhsheedeech (or Akhsheedeech), the second and third of whom were his sons; the fourth was a black eunuch, surnamed Káfoor, whom he had purchased and emancipated. On the death of this eunuch, a dispute arose respecting the succession; and though a grandson of the founder of the dynasty was proclaimed, and acknowledged by many, still the general voice seemed to be against him. This was in the year of the Flight 358 (A.D. 968-9). Of this crisis advantage was taken by El-Mo'ezz, the fourth of the Fawátim (or khaleefehs of the race of Fátiméh), who ruled over the greater part of Northern Africa. The Fawátim had succeeded the dynasty of Beni-l-Aghlab, founded by Ibráheem Ibn El-Aghlab, who, having been appointed governor of Africa Proper by the Khaleefeh Hároon Er-

Rasheed, rendered himself an absolute prince. Immediately upon hearing of the distracted state of affairs in Egypt, El-Mo'ezz sent thither a numerous army, and secured to himself, without the least opposition, the possession of that country. The city of El-Káhireh, or Cairo, which his general Góhar founded, became the residence of El-Mo'ezz and his successors. The title of "khalcefeh," as applied to a Muslim sovereign, signifies the legitimate successor of the Prophet, and, consequently, the head of the Muslim religion: the Fawátim, therefore, by assuming that title, excluded the princes of the race of El-'Abbás from the honour of being prayed for in the mosques of Egypt, considering that as their own prerogative. The period of their sway was most eventful: it was most remarkable for the horrid impiety and tyranny of El-Hákim, the seven years' famine in the reign of El-Mustansir (a wise and prudent prince, who reigned sixty years), and the burning of El-Fustát, under El-'A'did, the last of the Fawátim. This dynasty, which consisted of eleven khalcefehs (besides the three predecessors of El-Mo'ezz), lasted until the year of the Flight 567 (A.D. 1171).

The Fawátim were succeeded by the Eiyoobee-yeh, or sultáns of the race of Eiyooob, who were a Kurd family. The first of these was the renowned Saláh-ed-Deen (the Saladin of European historians).

He had been sent by Noor-ed-Deen, Sultán of Syria, with an army commanded by his uncle Sherkoooh, to assist El-'A'did, the last of the Fawátim, against the crusaders, who had taken the town of Bilbeys, and laid siege to El-Káhireh ; El-Fustát having been burned (as before mentioned) to prevent its falling into their hands : the invaders, however, accepted a sum of money to raise the siege, and evacuated the country before the arrival of the troops which Sherkoooh and Saláh-ed-Deen accompanied. These two chiefs were most honourably received by El-'A'did, who, soon after their arrival, appointed the former of them his prime-minister ; but Sherkoooh died only two months and five days after his promotion ; and the office he had enjoyed during that short period was conferred upon Saláh-ed-Deen, who requited his benefactor with ingratitude. In the year above mentioned (567), while El-'A'did was suffering from a fatal illness, Saláh-ed-Deen, urged by his former sovereign (the Sultán of Syria), ordered that the Khaleefeh of Baghdád should be prayed for in the mosques of El-Káhireh, to the exclusion of El-'A'did, who died that year, ignorant of this act of his minister. Immediately after his death, Saláh-ed-Deen caused himself to be proclaimed Sultán of Egypt. The title of Khaleefeh he did not presume to take, not being descended from any branch of the family of the Prophet : he therefore continued to acknowledge

the Khaleefeh of Baghdád as the head of the religion. To secure his independence he had to contend with many difficulties ; but his energetic mind, and personal bravery, aided by the possession of vast treasures amassed by the Fawátim, enabled him to overcome every obstacle. Soon after his assumption of royalty, he had to quell an insurrection raised by the adherents of the family of Fátimch. The Sultán of Syria, while meditating the invasion of Egypt, died in that same year ; and Saláh-ed-Deen subsequently added Syria to his former dominions ; whence resulted his frequent conflicts with the crusaders, which spread his fame over Europe. The apprehension of insurrections or invasions induced him to build the Citadel and third wall of El-Káhireh ; but the wars in which he afterwards engaged were those of conquest rather than defence. There were eight princes of his dynasty, which lasted eighty-one years and a few days : several of them rendered themselves memorable by their exploits against the crusaders. Syria was under princes of the same family, descendants of Saláh-ed-Deen.

To the dynasty of the Eiyoobeeyeh succeeded that of the Turkish or Turkomán Memlook Sultáns, also called the Bahree Memlooks.* Nearly a thousand of this class of Memlooks had been

* The term Memlook is generally restricted to a white slave, particularly a military slave.

purchased by El-Melik Es-Sálch Negm-ed-Deen, the last but one of the sultáns of the race of Eiyooob: they resided in his palace on the island of Er-Ródah; and hence they received the appellation of "the Bahree Memlooks;"* the word Bahree, in this case, signifying "of the river." After having been instructed in military exercises, these slaves constituted a formidable body, whose power soon became uncontrollable. A very beautiful female slave, called Sheger-ed-Durr (or the tree of pearls), of the same race as these Memlooks, was the favourite wife of Negm-ed-Deen. This prince died at El-Mansoorah, whither he had gone to protect his kingdom from the crusaders, who, under Louis IX., had taken Damietta. Toorán Sháh succeeded his father Negm-ed-Deen on the throne of Egypt,† but reigned only seventy days: he was put to death by the Memlooks, to whom he had rendered himself obnoxious; as he had also to Sheger-ed-Durr, who was an instigator of his death. Under this sultán, the French invaders of Egypt suffered a signal defeat, and Louis himself was taken prisoner. Sheger-ed-Durr caused herself to be proclaimed **queen of Egypt**, with the

* El-Makreezee.

† D'Herbelot and some other European writers have fallen into an error in saying that Sheger-ed-Durr was the mother of Toorán Sháh. She bore to Negm-ed-Deen one son, who died in infancy.

concurrence, and through the influence, of the Memlooks; and thus commenced, with a female, the dynasty of the Bahreeyeh, in the year of the Flight 648 (A.D. 1250); but this queen was soon obliged to abdicate, and one of the Bahree Memlooks, 'Ezz-ed-Deen Eybek Et-Turkamance, was raised to the throne, with the surname of El-Melik El-Mo'ezz. Sheger-ed-Durr became his wife; but being slighted by him on account of her age, she caused him to be put to death, after he had reigned nearly seven years. His successor, who was his son by another wife, delivered this infamous woman, Sheger-ed-Durr, into the hands of his mother, who, together with her female slaves, beat her to death with their wooden clogs, or pattens; her body was stripped naked, and thrown outside the walls of the citadel, whence, after some days, it was taken, and buried in a tomb which had been constructed for her by her own order. Syria, as well as Egypt, was under the government of the sultans of this dynasty; it was several times wrested from them, but promptly regained. The dynasty of the Bahreeyeh consisted of the queen above-mentioned, and twenty-four sultans; and lasted, according to El-Makreezee, one hundred and thirty-six years, seven months, and nine days. Several of these Memlook sultans (as El-Melik Ez-Zahir Beybars, Kala-oon, Mohammad Ibn-Kala-oon, and some others) are celebrated for their conquests, and for

the noble mosques and other public edifices which they founded. Few of them died a natural death : many were deposed, or banished, or imprisoned ; and a still greater number were victims of assassination. It is remarkable that the first of their dynasty was a woman, and the last a boy only six years of age.

The Bahree Sultáns increased the number of the Memlooks in Egypt by the purchase of Circassian slaves, who, in process of time, acquired the ascendancy. During the short reign of the child El-Melik Es-Sáleh Hajjee, the last of the Bakree-yeh, a chief of the Circassian Memlooks, named Barkook, was regent. In the year of the Flight 784 (A.D. 1382) the latter usurped the throne, and with him commenced the dynasty of Circassian Memlooks, also called the Burjee Memlooks, whose name was given to them because the Sultán Kaláoon had purchased a considerable number of this tribe of slaves (three thousand seven hundred), and placed them, as garrisons, in the towers of the citadel :* the word *burg* signifies a tower. Syria continued subject to the Burjee sultáns. This dynasty consisted of twenty-three sultáns, and continued one hundred and thirty-eight years and a half. Ez-Yahir-Barkook, El-Mu-eyad, Káid Bey, and El-Ghórre may be mentioned as the most

* El-Makreezee.

renowned of these princes : their splendid mosques and mausolea, as well as their military exploits, or private virtues, have kept up the remembrance of their names. Many of the sultáns of this dynasty were deposed, and several voluntarily abdicated ; but nearly all of them died a natural death.

The conquest of Egypt by the Turks, under the Sultán Seleem, in the year of the Flight 923 (A.D. 1517), put an end to the dynasty of the Burjee sultáns. El-Ghóree, the last but one of those princes, was defeated in a dreadful engagement with the army of Seleem, near Aleppo, and was rode over by his own troops. His successor, Toomán Bey, offered an ineffectual opposition to the invading army of Turks in the neighbourhood of his capital : he was hanged (or, according to some authors, crucified) at the Báb Zuweyleh, one of the gates of Cairo. A different form of government, in which the Memlooks were allowed to share, was now established. Egypt was divided into four and twenty provinces ; each of which was placed under the military jurisdiction of a Memlook Bey ; and the twenty-four beys were subject to the authority of a Turkish páshá, a general governor, appointed by the sultán. Other members of the new administration were seven Turkish chiefs, the generals of seven military corps, called in Turkish Ojáklees, and by the Egyptians Ogaklees, or Wugaklees : these composed the páshá's

council. One of the beys was styled Sheykh el-Beled, or Governor of the Metropolis; and this chief enjoyed a higher rank than any of the other beys, among whom, consequently, there were seldom wanting some whose ambition rendered them his secret or avowed enemies. By means of intrigue, or by the sword, or the poisoned cup, the office of Sheykh el-Beled was generally obtained. The Memlooks who thus shared, with the Turkish páshás, the government of Egypt, were commonly called collectively El-Ghuzz, that being the proper name of the tribe to which most of them belonged.* They disclaimed marrying Egyptian women, preferring females of their own or other more northern countries; but few of them had children; for most of the foreign females in Egypt are sterile, or have weak, sickly children, who die in early age. Such being the case, the Memlooks were obliged continually to recruit their numbers with newly purchased slaves from the same countries. Most of them, when first brought to Egypt, were mere boys, unable to wield the sabre; purchased by a bey, or other great officer, they served, for a while, as pages: those who were handsome were sure to be great favourites of their master; and every favourite who (after having been in-

* The Egyptians, in speaking of the times of the Memlooks who governed Egypt after its conquest by the Turks, say "In the days of the Ghuzz such an event happened."

structed in military exercises) displayed remarkable courage, fidelity, and other good qualities, was emancipated, and promoted to some high office: perhaps he became a káshif, and soon after, a bey. Thus it often happened that several beys owed their advancement to one and the same patron, to whose interests they generally remained devotedly attached. Each bey was constantly intent upon multiplying his Memlooks; and frequent arbitrary exactions from the peasants of the province under his command were the base means which enabled him to accomplish this object. During nearly two centuries after the conquest of Egypt by the Sultán Seleem, the authority of each successive páshá was, with few exceptions, respected by the beys; but the latter, by degrees, obtained the ascendancy; and, after the period above-mentioned, few of the páshás possessed any influence over the Sheykh el-Beled, and the other beys. Egypt thus became subject to a military oligarchy; and the condition of its inhabitants was rendered yet more miserable by frequent sanguinary conflicts between different parties of the Ghuzz. Such was the state of the country when it was invaded by the French; of whose government, in general, the people of Egypt speak in terms of commendation, though they execrate them for particular acts of oppression. After the expulsion of the French, Egypt

remained in a very disturbed state, in consequence of the contentions between the beys and the Turkish pashás, until the power of the former was completely annihilated by Mohammad 'Alee, the present ruler.

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